THE LIFE IN GRACE

Luman J. Morgan

Easter, 1931

My grace is sufficient for thee.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_C0-BOG-327

THE LIFE IN GRACE

By the same Author

HAVE YOU UNDERSTOOD CHRISTIANITY?
Crown 8vo, paper covers, 1*s.* 3*d.* net; cloth, 2*s.* net.

A BOOK OF INSTRUCTION FOR CHURCH PEOPLE.
Crown 8vo, paper covers, 1*s.* net.

MY PRIESTHOOD.
Crown 8vo, 4*s.* 6*d.* net.

MY IDEALS OF RELIGION.
Crown 8vo, 1*s.* 3*d.* net.

SIN AND SUFFERING.
Crown 8vo, 1*s.* net.

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.
LONDON, NEW YORK, TORONTO,
CALCUTTA, BOMBAY AND MADRAS

THE LIFE IN GRACE

BY THE RIGHT REV.

WALTER J. CAREY

BISHOP OF BLOEMFONTEIN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE BISHOP OF LONDON

FOURTH IMPRESSION

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C. 4
NEW YORK, TORONTO
CALCUTTA, BOMBAY AND MADRAS
1928

All rights reserved

BT
761
.C3
1928
c.2

Made in Great Britain

INTRODUCTION

BY THE BISHOP OF LONDON

GRACE! What a picture it calls up of a bright crystal stream flowing fast from beneath the Throne of God!

> "The stream that waters Paradise
> And makes the angels sing."

There is no word in religion more often on our lips than Grace. "By the grace of God I am what I am," cries the humbled St. Paul, and "There goes John Bradford but for the grace of God," cries another saintly man in later days, as he saw a criminal led to the gallows.

But how little we understand about Grace, or think clearly about it, or understand how we may spiritually receive it, and it is here that this book of Mr. Carey's will help us.

I have read it carefully through twice, and I find it a hopeful, clear, stimulating, and above all, a *real* book. It is the book of a man who has felt the diffi-

culties he faces, who does not write one word which he has not found in actual experience to be true.

There are some quite eloquent passages.

"If you are convinced that all the beauty of the world—every rose that blows, every pearly grey dawn, every sunset flush—has its root and origin in God: if you believe that all purity and innocence, all courage and heroism, all love and tenderness, are reflections of His character, it is not an insuperable difficulty to love Him.

"And when we further believe that He has offered us in Jesus a share of His Life, so that we can, as it were, get inside His Life and share His character and enjoy His joys for ever, we think we may well be acquitted of unreasonableness if we believe we can grow to love Him Who has done all this for us" (page 126).

This could hardly be said better.

Or again:

"Morality without love can produce a very sour and unlovely type of character. But the Christianity of Christ and His Saints, the Christianity of S. Francis or S. Hugh, is a happy thing, a human thing, a graceful and radiant thing. Christians

ought to want people to be happy as well as good: largely happy because they are good.

"And the happiness which comes from the life in God is not over-solemn, or heavy-featured, but is real, gay, sparkling, human happiness, the sort of thing Christ shared and produced at Cana of Galilee. It breaks into song and music, it tumbles with the children in the hay, it murmurs in the voices of lovers, it lives and revels in all that is strong and true, clean and cheerful.

It would fain colour all life, all work, all play" (page 170).

It is this gospel of Love and Happiness which alone, I am convinced, will win the world.

The book is written, of course, from a frankly "Catholic" point of view. How else can you get strong men to write books, if they do not write them in accordance with the truth as they see it? But, on the other hand, all matters of controversy are dealt with in such a charitable, considerate spirit that I feel certain that the definite and clear statement of the Catholic faith, as, for instance, with regard to Baptism, will cause no offence to anyone, even if it does not carry conviction to them. And so I send forth *The Life in Grace* as a

Lenten book for 1914 for my people to read. It will be no unworthy successor to the now quite numerous Lenten books which have been issued with so much care by Messrs. Longmans for several years. I am thankful to find how many *The Wondrous Passion*, by Mr. Drake, has comforted and helped—and I hope this may cheer him in his long, trying illness.

May *The Life in Grace* inspire us all to seek for that personal contact with the Wondrous Person seen in vision by St. John—"His eyes as a flame of fire"—the embodiment of undying vitality, that so living in Him, we may live "the life that is life indeed."

A. F. LONDON:

Feast of the Epiphany,
1914.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE seedtime of the earth is largely the harvest time of the Church, so when the Spring Fast of Lent overtakes us year by year it tests us with hard and searching questions as to our growth, our condition, our fruitfulness. It is not altogether a comfortable season.

Yet somehow, as years pass by, we begin to be aware that in spite of its hard demands we rather welcome the season of Lent.

It comes with its claims on our time and energy, asking for fresh and increasing efforts after holiness and self-discipline: but after all it is a call to reality, and deep down in our hearts we honour and welcome the real. For however much in ordinary life we cling to the superficial and avoid what costs effort, yet at bottom we are conscious of the worth and dignity of that which demands from us simplicity, truthfulness, discipline.

And Lent makes just these demands, that we should consider in absolute and naked truthfulness what is the source, the end, the object of our existence: whether we come from God and whether we return

to God, and if so, whether our lives, and the training we are giving to our lives, will stand the test and verdict of God's scrutiny and judgment.

For life is so complicated, so difficult, so artificial; there is "so much good in the worst of us and so much evil in the best of us"; the "cares and pleasures of this world" are so near and perilous to all of us; that it would be with trembling that even the best of mankind could say with truth, "I think, I believe, I hope, that God's Will is being done in me and by me."

So we might agree that everyone of us would be better for some thinking and pondering when Lent comes near: and this book is meant to help, if it can, any who are willing to think over what the Christian life means and asks.

More especially it aims at helping two classes of people.

First, those ordinary people who though really interested in Truth and Religion are unable, from one reason or another, to read much in the way of theology or criticism. I would wish to show them that it is possible for them to be truly and deeply Christian if they will seriously consider and enter into that life of Grace which the Incarnation of Our Lord makes possible; that is, I should like to persuade them that though we cannot all be religious

philosophers, yet the least and humblest of us may be very good Christians indeed.

And the second class I have in my mind would include the many who profess and call themselves Christians and yet are rather wistfully conscious that their religion is somewhat thin and poor in quality.

Our Christianity ought, we feel, to be rich and deep ; it should be clear in its aims, helpful to others, radiant with a power and light such as glowed in the Early Church.

Yet somehow it often is not. We struggle on, we manage to keep from some sins, we keep as it were a skeleton army in the field, we just hold the forts. Yet where is the fire, the power, the glory of the Faith once delivered to the Saints ?

My hope is to suggest to those who feel thus, certain lines of thought which conduct, as I believe, to those higher levels where the Gospel is indeed good news, and we become partakers of that power, light, and joy which can make our Christian religion the very core and centre of our existence, because we are partaking of the risen, glorified Life of Jesus and are living a "Life in Grace."

I hope that the theological part of the book—especially Chapter IV—will not frighten off many readers. No doubt there are a large number of people of simple faith and unquestioning minds

who have neither the ability nor the desire to hold truth in any systematic way. Such folk, I suppose, one would advise just to say their prayers, read their Bibles, use the Sacraments, and try to be good and kind. And indeed this would be true religion. But it is not right that all should be thus. There are many people with tidy minds who do not wish that their religion on its intellectual side should be a collection of bits and scraps.

They like to feel that the main doctrines of Christianity are coherent and related to each other, and form part of a great whole. If so, I shall not apologise for asking them to take a little trouble in order to get things clear.

. . . . . .

I should be unhappy if I did not express my gratitude to Dr. Stone for his labour in reading the proofs of this book and for making valuable suggestions. I only refrain from expressing myself in much warmer terms because I know he would shrink from such public reference to the continual kindnesses he shows to those who have the great good fortune to work with him and under him.

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION BY THE BISHOP OF LONDON . . v

AUTHOR'S PREFACE ix

PART I

CONSIDERATIONS NECESSARY FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF GRACE

CHAP.

I. GROWTH THE CONDITION OF ALL VITAL RELIGION 3

II. THE NEED OF RIGHT IDEAS ABOUT GOD 8

III. A SERIOUS VIEW OF SIN SHOWS THE NEED OF GRACE 17

PART II

OF CHRISTIAN GRACE

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE 27

PART III

THE GREAT ACTS OF GOD WHEREBY HE MADE GRACE POSSIBLE

V. THE SOURCE OF HABITUAL GRACE—THE INCARNATION 41

VI. THE ATONEMENT 52

VII. THE RESURRECTION AND THE ASCENSION 61

CHAP. PAGE
VIII. Pentecost and the New Life . . 69
IX. The Church: the Sphere of Grace . 80
X. The Sacraments: the Means of Grace 90

PART IV

THE RESPONSE OF MAN TO GRACE

XI. Conversion 105
XII. The Life of Prayer 113
XIII. The Life of Prayer: some Effects of Prayer 123
XIV. How Conversion issues in Worship and Sacrifice 128
XV. The Place of Sacraments in the Converted Life 137
XVI. The Christian Character . . . 152
XVII. The Christian Character in Action . 160
XVIII. The Place of Lent in "the Life in Grace" 173

PART I

CONSIDERATIONS NECESSARY FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF GRACE

CHAPTER I

GROWTH THE CONDITION OF ALL VITAL RELIGION

If the Life in Grace is ever to become a permanent actuality for us, it will do so as the result of gradual growth.

It would, of course, be absurd to deny that sudden upheavals and "catastrophic" events do occur in the course of a soul's life and growth towards holiness; but such eventful happenings (such as baptism, or a sudden conversion like S. Paul's) do not come from nothing or lead to nothing; they are climaxes which, however vivid, arise from previous processes and lead on to further processes: they are epoch-marking events in a life of gradual growth.

If then we are ever to be holy we must always be growing: if we stop growing we shall cease to be holy; for as in biology so in religion, to stop still is to stagnate, and stagnation spells first degeneration, then decay and death. This thought, if true, is surely startling and indeed rather alarming. Religion ceases to be something which we acquire once and for all and then live on the proceeds for the rest of our life. Baptism is not the end; conversion is

not the end ; to be a devout communicant is not the end ; all are stages in a process by which men must become ever more and more converted, and share ever deeper the Life of the Lord until we come to that End which none of us can in any way realise, but which must certainly comprehend the eternal possession of all Truth, Beauty, and Love because our life will then be hid "with Christ in God."

Do we shrink from the effort involved in this long upward progress? I think we often do. There comes a stage in many lives, possibly mainly in middle age, when we feel we have done "enough for honour," and we ask to die with decency and respectability, but feel that the limit of our spiritual conquests has arrived.

Here great care and self-knowledge are necessary. If we mean that our physical efficiency is not what it was, that we cannot travel the distances, that we cannot infuse the passion and fire of youth into some of our religious works, this is conceivably right and true: but if it means that we are to shorten our prayers, decline to worldly consolations and reliefs, withdraw from the Christian battlefield of work and suffering to some place of safety without honour, this is full of peril.

We may have to retire from the old battle-grounds where physical energy was of prime necessity, but there is room for advance and progress in other fields: patience to be acquired, faith to be perfected, prayer to be deepened, meditation and contemplation to be learnt or relearnt, intercessory prayer to be widened ; is there not scope here for constant

progress and advance until death ushers us (by the Grace of God) on to higher levels of Life ?

So I think we must accept it as an axiom that if our religion is to be real it must be a religion which is ever growing. We dare not stop growing, for arrested growth spells death.

And if we do accept this principle of growth, it is fascinating to see how co-terminous are the processes which we crudely describe as natural and supernatural. For what is the biological doctrine of Evolution except a description of how life grows in response to an external stimulus, and by responding to the stimulus grows and lives, but by refusal to respond degenerates and dies ?

All life is then seen to be a vast upward process, starting indeed in most primitive forms and phases, but gradually under pressure of external stimulus varying and developing until the vast series ends at its highest with the redeemed human soul sharing the Life of God.

It may not be within our capacity or province to understand many details of biology, but it does come into ordinary everyday knowledge that all true life of nation or individual is an upward growth, whether in the region of body, mind, or soul. But above all how true this is in regard to religion. The Bible becomes once more a magic book if we look upon it not only as a record of God's dealings with men, but as a moving cinema-picture of man's response to the Divine Stimulus, and man's gradual rise from elementary morality and religion to the final revelation in the New Testa-

ment of what humanity could become and do, in Christ.

If the Bible is a "static" book to us, wherein all the stages are equally at a level, then it becomes unintelligible and even immoral, but if it is a "dynamic" book, the record of a God-stimulated progress from the "ape and tiger" stage to the possibilities of man as revealed in Jesus and His saints, then we hold the key to its interpretation, then we shall understand its events and characters in their relation to the stage of progress to which men had, at any given period, attained.

But we must beware of thinking that we can look at the drama of man's progress as if we were outside the process ourselves. We who read the record are "in via" ourselves: we are ourselves pilgrims on the long road that leads to God, and in each of us individually, as in the Church collectively, so much yet remains to be accomplished, so much growth has to be won. We cannot stop: "on, on, to the City of God"; to stop is to fall out of the ranks, to straggle and to die.

Let none of us then think we have attained: we have doubtless sufficient Grace to enable us to attain, no doubt also in a real sense we have already begun Eternal Life, since we are already through Grace partakers of the Divine Nature, but we have not finished. Therefore, let us ponder, deeply and penetratingly, how in this Lent too as always, we must be growing; we must carve on our hearts, and grasp with our understanding—

"To live is to grow:
To cease to grow is to die."

And there is yet one other thing which must be remarked about growth.

Growth is often a painful process: we have all heard of growing pains.

If then our souls are to grow we shall find that a demand will be made upon us which involves constant trouble and pain.

We shall have to think a bit, we must read and study the Word of God, we must find time for church-going and religion generally. We must learn to pray steadily, seriously, continuously: our religion ceases to be an amateur affair, it becomes professional, it is a supremely important and vital thing.

This we must face. Growth will exact self-denial, toil, and pain. Religion demands sacrifices; we must prepare to make them.

CHAPTER II

THE NEED OF RIGHT IDEAS ABOUT GOD

BESIDES understanding that the Life in Grace must always be a growing and advancing process, there are certain other preliminary considerations which we must investigate if we are to understand why Grace is needed, what it is, and in what the "Life in Grace" consists.

For there are certain terms in theology as elsewhere which are meaningless except in relation to other terms which are taken as known.

"Redemption," for instance, is a meaningless term except in relation to sin or slavery or some other state of bondage or unhappiness from which redemption saves us. So if a writer or preacher wishes to make redemption intelligible he is bound to make a preliminary study or statement of the fact and meaning of sin. It is the same with the term "Grace" and the phrase "Life in Grace." Grace is always "the Grace of God," therefore if we wish to understand it we must, at least to some degree, understand the Nature of the God from Whom it comes. Otherwise we shall not be clear either as to what Grace is, or why it is that God makes claims

and demands upon us which cannot be satisfied without the help of His Grace.

And again, in dealing with Grace we must understand not only something about God, but something about sin too, for in Christian theology Grace comes in to save from sin as well as to unite to God.

So in this and the next chapter these two necessary postulates will be made, that if we are to understand adequately the fact of Grace and the need of Grace, we must come to have (1) right ideas about God, (2) a deep and serious view of sin.

Let us therefore examine our ideas about God, seeking to discover not only how we come to have any right ideas about God at all, but also whether the ideas we have are large and noble, worthy of our most Holy and Loving Creator.

. . . . .

We must admit, I fear, at the very outset, that the minds of even quite religious people can and do contain very limited and unworthy ideas about God.

The history of religion is too often a story of the crudity and narrowness of men's thoughts about God. To these misconceptions of God's Nature and character are due not only the great and striking blots on the history of the Christian religion such as religious persecutions: not only the hideous character of many primitive pagan rites and sacrifices: but much of the religious ignorance, narrowness, and intolerance which survives among ourselves.

I don't think it can be denied that there still exist in many of us conceptions of God which will not bear investigation; conceptions which make God

unreasonable, bigoted, partisan, or on the other hand good-natured, invertebrate, ineffective.

There still survive too, I believe, some of those detestable notions about predestination which actually imagine that a Loving God could doom to eternal pain and loss those who never had any real choice or responsibility in matters of good and evil.

And even among intelligent and educated persons one finds the most pathetically inadequate ideas of the God of Grace. He is to many a very powerful, very observant, very stern Magistrate, Who demands of His creatures—quite arbitrarily—all sorts of difficult denials and curtailments of the various desires which all normal men and women feel—strongly and naturally—for the different goods of this life.

Naturally in these circumstances men and women often fail. One day they die, and then comes God's chance: it is His turn now, and He will exact an overflowing measure of retribution for the pleasures which they desired and He grudged.

This is no caricature: I wish it was. It is a simple photograph of various misconceptions of God which exist in multitudes of unthinking minds.

How far away it all seems from the real truth about the God of infinite holiness and infinite love.

What then are the right lines on which Christians should think about God? How, as a matter of fact, have Christians come to have all the ideas of God which are true and right? The answer is that we come to have right ideas of God mainly through God's revelation to the Jews.

We do well, no doubt, to remember that even

now we know comparatively little about God, and that, as long as we live on the earth and see "through a glass darkly," much of Him must remain in shadow: yet all the same our partial knowledge of God is true knowledge, and this knowledge we largely gain from studying the revelation of Himself which God gave to the Jews. For the Jew was the religious genius of the world: therefore God used Jewish intuitions, Jewish comprehensions, Jewish ideas, as media whereby to reveal to the world, step by step, His own essential character and holiness.

It was in proportion to his grasp of the holiness and claims of God that the Jew came to feel the need of Grace: nobody feels the need of Grace to respond to a God who is unholy or unloving.

Now in the development of the Jewish mind, the true ideas of God were revealed stage by stage, and bit by bit. The first clear-cut idea about Him was that He was an Autocrat with authority and power over the people of Israel. We see this plainly in the story of the delivery of the Law at Mount Sinai.

There is no question of any Good Shepherd standing on the mountain side to bless His sheep: God the Lord was hidden in the gloom and thunder-clouds of Sinai: the great King did not argue or plead, He delivered His decrees and He meant to be obeyed. And it was with fear in their hearts that the cowering Israelites accepted the Lord as their King, and acknowledged themselves His obedient and unresisting subjects.

All this of course was a stage—and to us not a

very advanced stage—in the revelation of God. Yet it marked an enormous advance beyond the current heathen notions of their vile gods. We have progressed beyond the Sinai revelation of God, yet its basal lesson is still operative and true. God is our King, and we must obey; we shall never outgrow that truth.

The next great stage of the Revelation of God to the Jewish mind is the stage of the Prophets. With the prophets we leave behind the idea of God as merely or mainly the Autocrat. He remains King doubtless: but pre-eminently a Moral King: He is the Righteous God, the Lord of Righteousness, the Holy God Who demands an answering holiness from His people. Men were no longer to fear and obey Him simply because He was Lord, but because He was the moral Ruler Who had a moral right to the possession of man's heart, and made demands for holiness only because they were right and morally justifiable. And the third stage in the revelation of God's character to and through the Jewish mind lies in the New Testament. Here the coping-stone is laid, here we reach finality. "Our Father:" "God so loved the world:" "God is Love:" here you have the final revelation and explanation of God's Nature and of God's authority over His people. At first they had to obey because He had a right to command: then they must be righteous because His is a Righteous Life and a Righteous Heart: finally comes the explanation as to why He should expend all this trouble and care upon them, and why He wants them to be righteous as He is, and why

He offers them Grace in Jesus Christ: it is because He is their Father and Friend and Lover: it is because He loves them and would have them share His Eternal Life and Love for ever. Love explains all. These then are the progressive stages of Jewish thought, ending with the revelation of Jesus Christ: these are the right lines on which we too must come to think about God.

I should wish to make two notes at this point.

(1) If we miss out or slur over any of these three stages in the revelation of the character of God to the Jews, we inevitably get wrong in our conception of God. (That is why we must steep ourselves in the Old Testament before we can understand or appreciate the New.)

There are some, *e.g.*, whose minds are so impressed with the sovereignty of God that they forget His righteousness and His Love, so that their religion tends to be timorous, scrupulous, almost abject. They have spiritually tarried at Sinai: they should rise through the prophets to the Love of God revealed in Jesus. Others again insist so much on His righteousness that they forget His Love, and so, quite unwittingly, become self-righteous, unloving, judges of others, exhibiting that hard, precise, rule-of-thumb religion which is so alien from the love and freedom of the Gospel. Others again think so exclusively of the love of God that they turn the love of Him into mere sentimentality, not remembering that love is only safe when based on obedience and righteousness. Hence really pious people can go to church or chapel and sing that the King of

Love is their Shepherd, and yet (shall we say) pay a quite inadequate wage to their dependants, though one would have thought that righteousness was plainly and obviously outraged each time such underpayment was made. We must therefore try to think of God under all these categories and omit none.

(*a*) He is truly my Master and I must obey Him and His commands.

(*b*) But He is essentially righteous and holy: loving truth and honesty, hating the crooked, the mean, the false.

I must therefore respond to His holiness, learning to hate all that is unholy, selfish, and ungenerous.

(*c*) He is also essentially Love.

(2) But His Love is no mere sentimentality, it is a friendship and affection strong and holy, which demands the best of us and the best work from us. And we must respond—by His Grace—with a life of answering holiness and Love. For there is no limit to the love of God for us. He desires to incorporate us (in and through Jesus Christ) into His own eternal and most holy Life. In this connection the old Mystics were not afraid to use the term "Deification" as a description of the end of those whom God's Love wins to their perfect fruition: and we need not shrink from the word if we remember that it does not mean total absorption into the Deity but describes a result which preserves our true self, and yet admits us to share the Life of the "All." It does us good, I think, to dwell on the most desirable and happy end which God's love has prepared for those who love Him—union with

God : for ever learning the lessons and doing the works of Truth, Beauty, Holiness and Love : and, in God, enjoying them for ever. If we think of God in these ways we cannot go wrong.

. . . . . .

Such then are the ideas which underlie the Jewish-Christian conception of God, but I am quite willing to admit that these ideas, however essential and primary, may yet need some supplementing from other sources.

The categories of "Goodness" and "Holiness," as we generally use them, may not be quite wide enough to contain God.

In a true conception of God, we must also find room for Him as the Intelligence who makes the world intelligible,[1] and we must therefore recognise that in a real and true sense the scientist seeking knowledge and intelligibility, and the historian seeking truth, are "theologians," insomuch as the truth they find contributes something to our knowledge of God and His workings. Religious people are too apt to think of scientists as "secular" : this is going near to denying Intelligence as part of the Divine, and it robs the scientist of his rightful honour.

Again, in our conception of God we must find room for Him as creative power and activity : hence we shall recognise the Divine in the creative artist who interprets in terms of music and poetry, painting and architecture, the creative energy of God.[2]

[1] *Cf.* Tennant in *Cambridge Theological Essays.* (Macmillan.)

[2] *Cf.* Westcott, *Epistles of S. John*, chapter on "The Relation of Christianity to Art." (Macmillan.)

And indeed in all that is brave, loving, and true, we shall, if we are wise, catch glimpses of God revealing Himself: the beauty of the world, the loyalty of friendship, the true love of lovers, the pride of fatherhood, the joy of motherhood, the achievements and endurances of heroes, will all yield to us glimpses into the Nature and Being of God.

Yet we shall ask both scientists and artists, lovers and heroes, to forgive us if, as Christians, we insist that God has revealed Himself primarily in the Jewish race: in fulfilment of Jewish ideals; and in terms of Holiness and Love. So that, while we will not forget (indeed we will emphasize) the infinite manysidedness of that Holy One whom we call God, we yet shall think of Him pre-eminently in moral terms as King and Lord, Holy and Righteous, our Loving Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

And once we have grasped this, we perceive the need of Grace. For this Holy and Loving God must be served in holiness and answered with reciprocated love. Yet how can we sinners give Him what He deserves and asks? He must give us His Grace, or else, as S. Paul saw so clearly, we must despair.

CHAPTER III

A SERIOUS VIEW OF SIN SHOWS THE NEED OF GRACE

THE next consideration, without which "Grace" will be found to be meaningless, concerns the problem of sin.

If sin is of little import, redeeming Grace will be of little importance: a superficial wound needs no very serious remedy; hence the meaning of our Lord's remark that He came not to call the righteous but sinners, for sinners respond, knowing the profundity of their need.

Roughly speaking, those who deny or minimise sin are (1) those who disbelieve in God altogether and look upon sin as something which men cannot help, and as no more immoral or blameworthy than maggots in cheese or blight on a tree; (2) those who, while believing in God, look upon man's upward development as having taken place quite normally and naturally, without any such set-back or calamity as is implied in the Christian doctrine of a Fall.

No doubt the actual occurrence in Genesis may well be a picture rather than the description of a literal and single event, but there are none the less very good reasons why all thoughtful people should

take the serious view of sin that orthodox Christianity always has taken.

For Christians indeed the matter is, or should be, settled. For from the point of view of the teachings of the Bible and of Our Lord we find only one judgment about sin, that it is the great apostasy from God and the great disability which prevents man seeing and loving God, and is therefore the cause of man's ruin and man's woe.

From these teachings we gather that there are two outstanding results of sin.

Firstly, *sin separates from God.*

The early narratives of Genesis, which for Christians are inspired whether they be allegories or not, teach this momentous lesson from the very first. Man must leave the paradise of God, he must lose God's sweet and familiar friendship which was his birthright, he must live in separation and banishment, because he has sinned.

Cain is rejected because "sin coucheth at the door": Saul is not accepted because "to obey is better than sacrifice" and he has not obeyed: Dives is exiled from the Bosom of Abraham because he has been selfish. It is tedious to enumerate instances since they are so many, but the same theory and lesson is always taught and enforced, that God has a plan for everybody, and that in the fulfilment of that plan and in conformity to the Will of God lies man's peace and joy and health.

But man is tempted: he desires to fulfil his own desires apart from the will of God; and God will not force him, for his will is free within limits;

man's will is a factor in his own development upwards, and God respects it. Here is the momentous choice: shall man fulfil his own desires irrespective of God's will, or shall he choose what is harder but yet recognised as higher?

If he chooses aright, well: but if he sins, setting his own will against God's in open rebellion: or in weakness sinking to the life of selfishness, becoming self-centred (instead of being God-and-man-centred), then the man loses automatically the friendship of God; the union is broken, separation begins, degeneration sets in, and the man ceases to have a meaning in life, for his will is out of joint with the Will of God.

Sin has done its work, it has parted God and the soul. Sin separates.

And the other result of sin which we gather from Our Lord and the Bible, is that *by sin man is spoilt.*

Judas is the classic instance of the New Testament, Saul of the Old, but the lesson is emphasized in the case of nations and classes as well as of individuals: Sodom and Gomorrah are spoilt and ruined by lust, the Pharisees by pride. And because separation from God and the spoiling of souls are very terrible things, we get very plain, distinct, and awful teaching about sin and its consequences.

"And the door was shut." "And it was night." "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "None of those men which were called shall taste of my supper."

Let us make no mistake at all about Our Lord's

teaching: His kindness must not blind us to the plain warnings His kindness gives. Sin, rebellion, selfishness, refusal to go forward, these do separate from God, these do spoil, these do ultimately bring darkness that may be felt over the sinning soul: these do banish light, these do draw a blight of emptiness, unmeaningness, restlessness over the soul, for by them the soul is divorced from God, Who alone can fill it with life and endue it with meaning.

. . . . . .

But the argument about the serious nature of sin has its appeal to others besides professing Christians.

For it is not from Bible teachings and warnings alone that we reckon sin as a most serious thing: the facts of life are open to all of us, and conspicuous among them is that strange phenomenon, Remorse.

Why do we care so when we have sinned?

Why do we feel so remorseful, at least in our better moments and hours of insight?

It leaves us very cold in those dark and melancholy hours if we are told that our sin is after all very natural, and only the clinging remnants of aboriginal instincts and passions. That does not fit the facts: if that was the sole explanation we might well feel regret but never remorse; if I inherit gout or consumptive tendencies, the results perhaps of ancestral failings, I regret the fact, but I do not repent, I do not feel remorse.

Remorse shouts at us that we were once inheritors of something infinitely worth having: but that we

have lost it, by our wilfulness or weakness, at any rate by our fault, our own most grievous fault.

Remorse is the property of those who, having consciously or subconsciously caught a glimpse of the country inside the gates of Paradise, and having recognised that it was their birthright to dwell therein forever, yet know that the right is theirs no more, and that justly, because by their own fault it has passed from them.

This intolerable sense of infinite value lost and thrown away is the core of remorse: the pain of hell is the pain of loss.

Can we explain away this bitter cry of the human heart by cheap babblings about ancestral legacies, and anthropological survivals?

"Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness: according to the multitude of Thy mercies do away mine offences. Wash me throughly from my wickedness: and cleanse me from my sin."

Is this the easy regret of a man who has inherited some unpleasant tendencies he cannot help?

Doesn't it go a good deal deeper than that?

Therefore we shall incline to some real doctrine of the Fall: we shall think it true that the human race did collectively and individually decline to fulfil the recognised Will of God, and therefore, remembering its birthright, has individually and collectively expressed itself in a million ways in tones of repentance and remorse with which we would associate ourselves.

"Make me a clean heart, O God." This is the

spirit of those who take a serious view of sin, and accordingly, like John Baptist, like Simeon and Anna, look for and await and desire with keen desire a salvation from above and a bestowal of Grace which shall put them back into possession of that treasure of infinite value all the more prized because at one time it seemed lost.

. . . . . .

And I would wish to underline one point for the sake of the careless and uncommitted.

"I'm not doing any harm," "I'm not committing any great sin," are phrases constantly employed, and the users imagine that as a consequence they do not need the common Grace and Salvation. Yet sin is not simply doing open and vivid acts of rebellion or recklessness such as murder and adultery: such sins are, in a sense, less deadly because there is no disguise or excuse about them, and repentance is likely at any moment because the sin is patent and acknowledged.

Christianity teaches that sin is not-to-be-conforming-to-the-Will-of-God: to be following out a self-chosen and not a God-chosen track: to be self-willed and not God-willed.

Not to be doing God's Will is sin: hence the deadliness of the Pharisees' sin; they were living on a line of their own and not of God's choosing, and the fact was concealed from them by the accident that their own line happened to be respectable. It was none the less contrary to God's will, and was all the more dangerous because it did not contradict the ordinary canons of right conduct. They de-

ceived themselves because their disease lay in their motives and not in their acts.

If you want to know whether you are a sinner probe motives. Do not ask, "Am I committing great crimes?" but earnestly inquire, "Is God's Will increasingly becoming my will?" If you can face this question with unflinching candour you will understand both what penitent sinners feel, and also how good to the sinner sounds the good news of that gospel of redeeming grace which offers pardon to the guilty, restoration to the spoilt, and New Life to the lifeless and the dead in sin. For the gospel of Grace is the good news of restoration to a state of holiness, happiness, and power *proper to man.*

We have spoken and thought too much as if sin were man's starting-point in his pilgrimage to God.

Not so: sin is the disease which has obscured man's true starting-point. Man is originally made for God and not for sin: for happiness, not for sorrow. We are not ourselves when we sin, we are suffering from a blight, a disease: we are ourselves, fulfilling our original call and function, when we are in happy, strong, loving alliance with the God for Whom we were made.

Therefore more determinedly than ever let us resist and hate sin the disease, and welcome more heartily God's saving Grace, which heals us from the wounds of sin and puts us back into our own proper native place as loving and happy children of God.

I should like to add one note on "a sense of sin."

It is quite true that the lack of an appreciation of the separating and spoiling character of sin is responsible for much feebleness and inadequacy in religion.

But it is surely not necessary that those who have made their peace with God, and are enjoying that inward content and serenity which God ordinarily bestows on the possessors of a clear conscience, should feel or speak (to God or man) as if they were "wallowing in sin."

Such persons would know that sin was an awful thing which they hated and loathed; they would do their uttermost, by the grace of God, to avoid it always; they would feel deeply the corporate sins of the Church and the world; they would always have a general penitence for past sin. They would also recognise wholeheartedly that if God withdrew His protecting hand they would at once sink back into wretchedness and evil.

Yet in their prayers or preparation for Communion it would be surely unreal if they used the same language of remorse and repentance as the unforgiven who have not found peace. And if they try (in order to stimulate an artificial penitence) to recall old and forgiven sins, they are doing something which, at least for ordinary people, is psychologically mischievous and religiously faithless.

Let them use the language of gratitude and thanksgiving, and rejoice without ceasing in that inward delight and freedom which God means to be the normal possession of His forgiven and redeemed friends.

PART II

OF CHRISTIAN GRACE

CHAPTER IV

THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE

THE considerations put forward in the last two chapters have, I hope, paved the way for a clearer understanding of the fundamental Christian doctrine of Grace, for until we have thought seriously about God and sin and salvation we can appreciate neither the need nor the meaning of Grace.

No doctrine is of greater importance; yet it is often quite uncomprehended, or at most is not recognised as being—what in truth it is—the hinge on which the soul is set into God.

What does the average Christian understand by "Grace"? What is it? Is it some vague kind of help from God? If so, how does it come? How is it got? What is its function? What does it do for us, or wherein should we be lost or poorer without it? These are questions which cry out for an answer from Christians, and an intelligent Christianity must have an answer ready.

Let us, for the sake of clearness, take a current definition of Grace, even though we may (and shall) find it incomplete and in need of expansion and supplement.

"Grace is a supernatural gift of God to make us

holy and to save our souls." Will this do as a definition ?

In a wide and real sense it is certainly true, but it is incomplete as being indeed a description of Grace but not necessarily of *Christian* Grace.

For it would be a perfectly adequate definition of the spiritual help given to Moses, to Isaiah, to John the Baptist, and to all the saints of the old dispensation.

And yet we know that Our Lord said of John the Baptist that though he were the greatest of Old Testament saints yet the least in the Kingdom of Heaven (*i.e.* the Kingdom of Grace) was greater than he.

We want a definition which will make it clear that while Moses and S. John the Baptist received real supernatural help from God and were "men of Grace," yet Christians have received something far deeper and greater. If we want to get this perfectly plain we shall have to fall back on some old terms and distinctions and speak not of one but of two kinds of Grace—Actual Grace and Habitual (or Sacramental) Grace—and these terms must be carefully defined. By "Actual Grace" I mean all drawings and motions and helps which God, by His Holy Spirit, sends us through all sorts and kinds of influences and circumstances, that we may be drawn into closer union with Himself.

Actual Grace operates through both spiritual and physical causes ; thus a thunderstorm may lead us to remember a neglected God, as Horace remarked : a shower may drive us into church and so to prayer :

a broken leg may give us opportunity for thought and repentance.

We cannot think too widely of this form of Grace. All influences, spiritual and physical : all conditions which make for evolution upwards : all gropings of primitive man after progress : all holy thoughts and feelings which rise unbidden in the heart or mind : books, sermons, the impulse to pray or study—all these, so far as they tend upward, are the result of Actual Grace, and proceed from the Love of God, Who, by His Spirit, is drawing His creatures nearer Himself.

But Actual Grace is not exclusively or necessarily Christian, though it specially acts on Christians. It acted in Abraham and David, it worked in the Buddha, it energises in all men, it is the light which lighteth every man, it is God influencing lives "from a distance." Thus all motions, drawings, longings, influences which lead men to God and goodness are the operations of the Actual Grace of God. But these do not constitute the most intimate form of Grace. God is acting here "at long range" : the operations of Actual Grace are like letters which lovers send across the sea ; they do not constitute marriage and the linking up of two lives into one. That side of things belongs to another department of Grace, the sphere of Habitual Grace.

What then is Habitual Grace ?

By Habitual Grace I mean something very much deeper than Actual Grace ever is, or was, or will be. Indeed this doctrine goes to the very bottom and root of the Christian relationship between God and

man. For this sort of Grace is nothing else or less than the Life of God Himself made available for us through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Ordinary mortal men and women, born of the dust, of themselves most feeble and powerless, are yet invited to enter an upward process whose end is nothing else than to share the Life of God eternally: and the sharing of that Life has been made possible through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

For countless ages God stimulated the upward progress of the race by His Actual Grace: the time came when man was spiritually fitted and educated to receive something more. Then God acted. The great day came: Jesus was Incarnate, and God through Him and in Him enables men to become Sons of God by sharing (through Sacramental means) the human, glorified, communicable Life of Jesus—in a word, God bestowed upon man Habitual Grace.

The stages whereby this Grace was given are familiar enough to Christians, yet they will bear repeating.

God (after long preparation of the world, mainly through the Jewish race) sent His own Son to redeem the world. And this redemption consists not only of an atonement for sin made by the Son of God, but also (and this is what many Christians forget) in a communication and gift to atoned-for souls of a New Life, the risen and glorified Life of Jesus Christ.

And this sharing of the Life of Jesus Christ, *i.e* this partaking of Grace, is possible for us because

of the Incarnation and those Sacraments which are the means by which the Incarnate Life is extended to, and shared by, the Christian children of God.

This then is Habitual Grace—the Life of Jesus extended to us and received by us. Christ took our Humanity into union with his Divine Person. He took it, redeemed it, glorified it, imparts it as Grace. And it is as sharing this glorified, imparted Humanity of Christ that we become "Members of Christ": "Branches of the Vine": "Members of the mystical Body of Christ": "partakers of Grace": "partakers of the Divine Nature." How often we have used or heard these glorious titles without attaching to them any real meaning at all!

Thus the problem of Habitual Grace is the problem whether men and women can share in the Incarnate Life and the perfect universal Humanity of Jesus Christ, and so be "in" Him. The answer of Christian theology is that we *can* share His Life, not only by way of faith and loyalty and love, but by an actual participation and incorporation of which the Sacraments are the means and instruments. And the Life of Christ so communicated, so imparted, is Habitual or Sacramental Grace.

The steps and processes by which this Grace—this Life—comes to us from Jesus will, I hope, prove to be simple enough for any to understand. At one end, so to speak, we find the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God: at the other end are converted souls using faithfully the Sacraments, the "means of grace," whereby the Incarnate and glorified Life of Jesus reaches them. In between

these two ends lie the great Acts of God and the correspondences of man which make this Sacramental union between Christ and His children possible and actual. Hence arises the possibility of the "Life in Grace"—the Christian life which faithfully and convertedly appropriating the Grace of God (both Actual and Habitual), thereby grows steadily towards the full expression in human terms of the Life and Mind of God. This is the fully Christian life to which we are all called, a life which is to be as Godlike and godly as human limitations admit. We shall not work it all out at once, but even in this world we can start and make some progress. In another world we trust we shall attain it in its fullness.

To many this theory of Grace may be attractive but not without serious difficulties. Its attractiveness, I think, would be conceded: what can be conceived of as more satisfying than that the long upward march and progress of man should end in complete union with God; and that God Himself in His love and mercy should have met man halfway on his earthly pilgrimage and should have given him, under the form of Grace, a real and present share in the Life of Jesus, so that in Jesus he could finish his long course with power and joy?

The theory also of Habitual (Sacramental) Grace might be felt to be easy enough if it were only true: God, the Source of all Life, desiring to share with His creatures His overflowing Life: Jesus, the Bridge between God and man, Himself both truly God and truly human: the Humanity of Jesus

assumed, redeemed, glorified, and communicable to men: the Sacraments as the spiritual-material means whereby the Life of Jesus is actually communicated to spiritual-material man: the Christian life wherein the converted sharer of the Grace of Christ lives the Christian life of love and effort: all this is simple enough, but is it true? Can the Life of Jesus be really transmitted to men? It could not be done, of course, without great Acts on the part of God: but, granted this, the spiritual communication of spiritual life from God to His spiritual children seems no more difficult than the human communication of physical life from parent to child. That human transmission of life from parent to child is equally mysterious and yet the most patent of facts.

What casual visitor to this planet, if ignorant of the laws of life, could ever have guessed that the transmission of life from parent to child was possible and actual? If a man through physical generation can pass on to his son his own life, his very features, even some of his apparently meaningless idiosyncrasies, can it be an insoluble difficulty that God can find a way of imparting His Spiritual Life to His children? or that He has done so through Incarnational and sacramental processes? The difficulty really comes to be not whether God *can* do so, but whether He *has* done so: and this question I should answer affirmatively by the teaching of the Lord Himself and the theology of that Church which the Holy Spirit came to guide into all necessary truth.

To sum up: it is of the greatest importance that if we can think at all we should have some conception of Grace which is both clear and wide. We want to avoid all those ideas of Grace which seem to imply that God is "mainly occupied in concocting different brands of Grace and retailing them to ecclesiastics to be distributed at their discretion,"[1] and yet we ought to be clear what Grace is, and how we can obtain it.

Perhaps we might leave it thus: The term "Grace" (which is generally used loosely and vaguely for any kind of help God gives man) really includes two sorts of Grace — Actual and Habitual Grace.

(1) Actual Grace includes all the inward and outward movements and events by which God, by His Holy Spirit, draws His creation to Himself.

(2) Habitual Grace is the Human Life of Jesus, which — now spiritualised, risen, ascended, and glorified—is communicated to us in those Sacraments which thus are seen to be the means of extending His Incarnate Life to men.

This then is Grace: and its meaning, its validity, the very sanity of those who believe in it, will depend on the truth of the central doctrines of the Christian religion.

For if Christ be not God: if He be not truly Man: if He never rose from the dead: if His risen life be not communicable, then the whole doctrine of Grace collapses like a house of cards.

If we falter about the truth of the Incarnation,

[1] Gillett in *The Claims and Promise of the Church.* (Mowbray.)

the doctrines of Grace cease at once to have any meaning. Jesus is, at most, a good example.

If, however, the Christian Creed is true, and Grace is real, then it only remains for us to use that Grace rightly. For in case I may be misunderstood I do here most decidedly refuse to be accused of maintaining that the effects of Grace are simply mechanical. Grace demands both a preparation and a result, or it will fail of its effects.

It is obviously possible to frequent the Sacraments and yet remain narrow and unspiritual; for the Sacraments are not magic, they do not act in independence of the heart and will of the receiver: we must ever be using our best endeavours to correspond to Grace if ever we are to bring forth the fruits of Grace: we must surrender our hearts if we are to enter into His Life.

We only enter the Incarnate Life of Christ profitably, *i.e.* use Habitual Grace fruitfully, if we are inwardly growing in that repentance, faith, and love, which are always and everywhere the conceded conditions of any effective use of the Sacraments and any real growth into the Life of God.

If, however, what has been stated in this chapter is true, we come upon a further conclusion of the utmost importance. For while we study the problem of Grace we discover what is the real and ultimate end and goal of human lives, we find the answer to the age-long question as to the meaning of the riddle of human life. God means us to live by His Grace Actual and in His Grace Habitual, so that our lives may become increasingly the Life of Jesus expressed

in us. And this present participation in the Divine Life and Grace will not be for this life only ; it will, we trust, continually deepen and increase until we share utterly, fully, and for ever, the Eternal, Divine Life of God.

If only we can keep clear in our minds that Christian "Deification" is not a pantheistic absorption into the Deity, but denotes that while eternally "in God" we yet in a real sense shall remain ourselves, then we can safely use the boldest language concerning the effects of Grace on our present and future relationship to God.

"Act like God because you are already in God," would be an aphorism about our present relationship to God not only truthful but practicable, *if* people would only understand and use Christian Grace : for the miseries, the failures, the inequalities of life are mostly due to the fact that while the Grace of Jesus is waiting to exalt every soul to the Father, yet men will neither believe in it, use it, nor act upon it. "Neither will they believe though one rose from the dead."

But for those who have ears to hear, this doctrine of Grace, though despised by men, is truly the good news. It is to them the master-key to the puzzle of life : it is the trumpet call that inspires the continued and sustained upward effort : it is the serene and noble truth that begets the sweet fruits of love, joy, and peace. For here is the end of man ; not to rot in the grave after a life of unmeaning effort and purposeless toil, but, in Jesus (*i.e.* from our Baptism onwards), to share progressively the very and eternal

life of God, working as He works, happy as He is happy, loving as He loves. This is the object of the Incarnation, this is the eternal purpose of the Love of God, this is the explanation of Grace. Why is it that men do not believe it? Because they hesitate about the Deity of Jesus; because they do not understand the Incarnation. They think Him semi-divine, or as being merely the best man who ever lived: they do not understand that, in Him, God has assumed humanity that He may redeem it, glorify it, and then share it with His redeemed.

If only mankind would believe that, and act upon that, we could turn not only our own hearts, but even this poor old world of ours, now too full of selfishness and suffering, into something like a Paradise of God. And would God it were so.

NOTE

I hope I have made it absolutely and perfectly clear in the preceding chapter that the Human Nature which Christ assumed at His Incarnation, in Which He died and rose again, and with Which He ascended to His present position of glory and majesty, *is a transmissible and communicable Humanity*, by incorporation into Which we find Salvation. As definitely as we share the physical humanity of our parents through physical generation, we share the spiritual glorified Humanity of Jesus through spiritual regeneration. Child-birth is a birth into the humanity of Adam: Baptism is a birth into the Humanity of Jesus. There is no more difficulty in the one case than the other.

This truth is the heart of the religion of the Incarnation, and is the explanation of the importance the Church has always attached not only to Christ's proper Divinity and Real Humanity, but also to Baptism and Communion as being the nexus and point of contact between our individual humanity and the

glorified Universal Humanity which our Lord possesses and imparts. Outside this sacramental truth and fact we could perhaps have attained to any heights of mystical love and devotion to God (as indeed the Old Testament saints attained, and as, *e.g.*, the Quakers of to-day attain), but we could never have shared in the redeemed and glorified Humanity of our Lord, through which we are joined to Him and in Him to the Father. It is a difficult truth, no doubt, and needs some vision and some thought, but is none the less the noble and central truth of that Christian religion which, through the Incarnation and all it involves, offers us nothing less than Eternal Life in the Christ Who is God.

PART III

THE GREAT ACTS OF GOD WHEREBY HE MADE GRACE POSSIBLE

CHAPTER V

THE SOURCE OF HABITUAL GRACE— THE INCARNATION

THE Source of all Grace, as we have already seen, is God Himself, but the first act by which the Life of God was made concretely available for us (if I may use such an expression) as Habitual Grace, was the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom came Grace and Truth.

It is true that man's participation in Grace did not actually take place (except by anticipation) until Pentecost, but since the bestowal of Grace could not have taken place at all (according to the actual Christian religion) without the Incarnation, it becomes necessary to study the Incarnation with care, paying special attention to those various steps in the Incarnate Life, and to those actions of the Incarnate Saviour, which led up to, or made possible, the Gift of Grace.

The doctrine of the Incarnation, simply stated, is that God the Son, at a certain moment in time, assumed Human Nature in addition to the Divine Nature He possesses from eternity, and so "was made Man." (Here the theology of the Athanasian Creed will prove of incalculable value.) In S. John's Gospel the writer puts the same truth in his own language: "The Word was made Flesh."

The Word of God, the "effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance,"[1] Who from all eternity is, with the Father and the Spirit, One God, took Flesh of the substance of the Virgin Mary, His mother, and was made (not an individual man, but) very Man—His Human Nature being Universal and not particular—and this by the creative operation of the Holy Ghost, not by the normal physical processes by which ordinary children are begotten and born.

This is the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, which at first was held untheologically and naively, but afterwards under the guidance of the Spirit became the explicit belief and dogmatic centre of the Christian creed, and holds that position still in all orthodox Christianity.

"Christ is God and Christ is man" is the verdict and judgment of historic Christianity: it will not do to say that Christ is "Divine," for in a sense we are all "Gods,"[2] but Christ is "of one substance with the Father," which we certainly are not.

Let us be quite clear about this point: Christianity as it has come to us down the ages has been the religion of God made Man. One might imagine an intellectual necessity to deny this central truth and maintain that Jesus Christ was only a man; but if so, why call the resulting religion Christianity? Christianity has a perfectly definite and historical meaning and connotation—it is the religion of Jesus Christ, God the Son made Man: if you extract the

[1] Hebrews i. 3, R.V.

[2] "I have said, Ye are Gods." Psalm lxxxii. 6; S. John x. 34.

marrow and core of the Christian religion, is it honest, or even reasonable to call the remainder by the old name? It is really an attempt to get the custom of the old firm by killing it and stealing its goodwill.

Christianity without Christ as God might conceivably be a true religion, but it is not historic Christianity; a new religion should seek a new name.

. . . . . .

I shall not be expected to deal at any length with the great doctrine under discussion. That has been done in many ages by many skilled and devout men. We can read S. Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*, or Dr. Liddon's *The Divinity of Christ*, or Bishop Gore's Bampton Lectures; if we wanted the most modern books we could study Dr. Macintosh's *The Person of Jesus Christ*, or Bishop Weston's *The One Christ*, or Mr. McDowall's fascinating little volume, *Evolution and the Need of Atonement*.

These are but a drop in the vast ocean of literature which attempts to understand the full significance of the Incarnation.

What I should wish to do is merely to record a few lines of thought about the Incarnation which are vivid to myself, in the hope that they may be useful to others as well.

(1) What is the exact theology of the Incarnation?

One Person, two Natures.

I know, of course, how much disputing there

can be about the term "Person": how the term *Persona* is a bad Latin attempt to translate the Greek *Προσῶπον*, and so on, but I venture to think that the Athanasian Creed will never be obsolete as long as the present world endures, and that the term "Person" is the best we can get in a universe where it is so difficult to make names express facts.

So the Son of God is for us primarily the Eternal Word, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Mirror of the Father's Glory, the Object of the Father's Love.

And the Son has always possessed a Divine Nature, the Nature proper to the Son of God; it is, *e.g.*, of the Nature of the Son to proceed from the Father by way of generation, just as it is the Nature of the Father ("The Fountain of Deity") to beget.

But the Son of God possesses another Nature in addition to that which He eternally has possessed.

He now possesses a Human Nature, which He took of His Virgin Mother 1900 years ago, and will possess for ever.

This is that Universal, Representative, Transmissible Human Nature which He took at His Incarnation, which He now possesses in Glory, and transmits (as Habitual Grace) to human souls: the second Adam, as Head of a new redeemed humanity, imparting His own life to His own children, the Vine transfusing its sap into its own engrafted branches.

All this is difficult, and it took the Church a long

time to work it out; yet it is supremely worth considering and weighing, for this is the Catholic theology of the Incarnation. We cannot do without a true and high theology: indeed it is for lack of it that so much current Christianity is, by common consent, invertebrate and unconvincing.

(2) Why do we believe that Jesus is the Son of God when such a belief must involve so many difficulties?

Dr. Macintosh has a very interesting passage as to the motives which led the mind of the Early Church to come to think of Christ as Christians did. He distinguishes four main motives.

(*a*) The conviction that in Jesus the revelation given in the Old Testament was terminated and fulfilled.

(*b*) The characteristic Early Christian faith in the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God: their sense that the Holy Spirit (of which they were full) was His Spirit: their assurance that He would come again: all these considerations inclined them to attribute to Him antecedents worthy of His present dignity.

(*c*) The success of missionary endeavour made it clear that "Jesus was for the whole world," and therefore must be defined in absolute terms.

(*d*) The witness of Jesus to Himself "could not but quicken thought regarding His consciousness of a unique Sonship and the presupposition on which it rested."[1]

[1] *The Person of Jesus Christ*, by H. R. Macintosh, D.D. (T. & T. Clark.)

I have called attention to this passage because of its interest, but it is a more modern question I want to investigate: Why do we to-day believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God in the sense the Church has always believed ever since it matured its theological thought?

No doubt there are an infinity of answers to this question, but I submit that the real reasons are five in number.

(*a*) We believe firstly in the trustworthiness of the voices of the past.

Is the Bible record on the whole to be trusted; is the tradition of Early Christianity reliable; are the writers and transmitters of early records and events honest men, who, even if mistaken in some interpretations of facts, or even in their observation of facts themselves, are yet honest, and, in main lines, right?

To this we answer, less humbly than would have been the case twenty or even ten years ago, Yes.

(*b*) We are really impressed by the argument used with effect by Dr. Liddon in his Bampton Lectures, that the claims of Jesus are substantiated by His character.

Of course He claimed to be the Son of God in a special and unique sense: it is difficult to be patient with the interpretations which whittle away His claims until you wonder why any such were ever made for Him at all.

Jesus was condemned to death for blasphemy (Matthew xxvi. 65, Mark xiv. 64, Luke xxii. 71, John xix. 7), which is inconsistent with the con-

tention that He only claimed to be a human teacher or prophet. With most men we regard any exalted claims with suspicion, how then can we be expected even to consider a demand for faith such as this? Because of His character. Whoever was like Him?

(*c*) Another motive for our faith will be found in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

In the case of many miracles we are irritated by finding that though we would not deny them we yet have no data we can really get a grip on, except our general faith in the trustworthiness of the narrative or the writers.

But with the Resurrection it is different. Across history from that day to this lies the vast bulk and stature of that Church which was built on the Resurrection Faith.

The Church must have had some event from which it started so vigorously and triumphantly: it is really silly to imagine that the Apostles, fresh from their Good Friday poltroonery, would have built up, within the space of a few days, a living Society, with a pulsating life and a flaming message, unless *something* had happened to change the current of their fears, and re-endow them with that superhuman vigour. If ever *élan vital* appeared in a concrete case, it appeared here; what possible cause of its outburst is so natural as the Resurrection, what theory fits the facts half so well as the traditional story?[1]

[1] Cf. *The Journal of Theological Studies*, January 1913. Article on "The Resurrection Appearances," by Dean Armitage Robinson.

(*d*) Nor need we be ashamed to put reliance on "a posteriori" considerations. That is to say we trust the witness of the Saints, and religious people generally, who testify that their belief in Jesus and their life in Jesus is identical with their belief in, and life in, God. This testimony might be ignored if it were sparse or intermittent, but when we find it in such volume and abundance, we can hardly be blamed for finding in it a confirmation of our belief.

(*e*) And we believe also because of the testimony of our own experience. We have made an experiment and it has come off. We have believed in Christ as the Son of God and the belief has produced light and not darkness. There was a time perhaps in our lives when we did not pray, when we did not ask that God would lead us on, when we loved to choose our own path and found that our way led through darkness into confusion: but when we turned to God and tried to live by the faith of Him Who offers Himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, all we can testify is that where once we found obscurity we have now discovered light, in place of confusion we have found peace.

And so with prayer: we are able to affirm simply and honestly that the prayers we make as Christians who trust in the Atonement for pardon and to the Risen Christ for help, do lead us to an inward joy and security unknown before; others may be able to find peace without Christian faith and prayer, we cannot: and who can blame us if we find in our experience of the power of the Christian religion a very

convincing proof that the Christ of Christianity is what Christianity has always asserted, our Master and Friend, our Lord and our God ?

(3) I can imagine, however, someone replying that perhaps there is something in all this ; but even so does it all really matter very much ?

Cannot one get through life without all this puzzling over an admittedly difficult subject ?

I will try and put succinctly the reasons why these beliefs are not only important to us Christians but all-important.

The Incarnation is to us the proof and assurance that God cares for us and the world.

The longings of our hearts after God : the aspirations after a holiness and perfection dimly perceived and loved, but never realised : our sense of justice, which cries out for some readjustment of the inequalities of life, and that God should share our pain : the craving for cleansing, purification, and power, which at times is so real and pressing—all these cry out that God should care. And in the doctrine of the Incarnation we get our answer. God does care, God has come, God has shared human life and suffering, God will triumph, God will give us power and grace, and we shall share the eternal victory. Again in the doctrine of the Atonement we find the satisfaction of our sense that we must indeed be cleansed, but that the cleansing should belong to and be part of some great and notable action grand enough and convincing enough to form an adequate counterbalance to the gravity and malignity of sin.

For it seems congruous, though no doubt difficult to express, that the awful devastation and pollution of sin should be atoned for by some even deeper and profounder act of reparation and representative penitence. This we find in the Cross of God, to which, when our sinfulness weighs on us, we turn with real relief and satisfaction, for it seems adequate ; sin with all its depths of evil is more than countered by the Passion of God. And the Incarnation also gives us confidence that we may yet attain what we feel we were made for—union with God.

For if some prophet had assured us that we might hope on, that one day perhaps God would yet save us, it would give us very poor comfort compared to what we now possess.

For if He Who came to save us be really God then all His teachings and promises and offers will come true, and we can really and truly have eternal life in Him and hopes of perfection hereafter.

For if He be God-made-Man, Who has taken into Himself that universal human nature of which we are all partakers, then His promises to transmit to us His own redeemed and glorified Humanity seem possible indeed.

If He is the Bridge, at one end touching God, and at the other touching humanity, then the way is clearer by which our particular human nature may get into union with His glorified Humanity, and so in Him may attain to God.

Because He has become a Son of Man, we may yet, we think, become sons of God.

And finally, if Jesus be God, we can venture to

try and follow His example. For if He were only a splendid man His example would be our despair. But if he be God, He will help us by His Grace, and the character to which, outside Him, we should never dare to aspire, we may yet, in Him, progressively attain; but this hope, like all other aspirations and longings, springs only from our faith that the life of Jesus of Nazareth was the life of the Incarnate Son of God.

NOTE

I ought perhaps to make it clearer than I have, that the Church's apprehension of our Lord's Deity was a gradual process.

While He walked on earth with His disciples He was to them a dear companion and friend, who though not as other men, was yet quite human and familiar. In moments of insight some of them guessed that He was the Messiah, but no more.

The first chapter, *e.g.*, of S. John's first Epistle could not have been written by any of the Apostles till after the Resurrection, and probably not until long after that.

It was the Crucifixion and the subsequent Resurrection which —combined with Pentecost—forced the Apostles and the Church generally to try and "place" this wonderful Person. Christian theology was not a pastime of the Early Church with which to occupy spare moments pleasantly. It was a moral and intellectual necessity then, as now, to find an adequate theory to account for this mysterious and wonderful Man, this dead and risen Lord.

So it is really quite wrong to think that we should be nearest the true understanding of our Lord's Person if we could put ourselves in the frame of mind of the disciples before the Crucifixion. The disciples themselves were subsequently and gradually trained by the Spirit to think rightly about the meaning of the Lord's Person and Work. We too are right, under the guidance of the same Spirit, to continue to seek, by a true theology, ever fresh light and truth on this supreme subject.

CHAPTER VI

THE ATONEMENT

AFTER the Incarnation, the Atonement. For this is the next cardinal Act of God in the drama of redemption by which man obtains readmittance to the Life of God. For the Incarnation by itself cannot save us; Jesus indeed lived amongst us and walked the earth for thirty-three years before His Passion, but sin was not thereby conquered, man's freedom was not yet purchased. It was the Atonement which won that victory.

And indeed without the Atonement the Incarnation would have been useless and even cruel. For what use is it to tell us of a loving God if our sinfulness debars us from loving Him in return? Where is the kindness of bidding us live a divine life if our sins make the very attempt tragic and absurd? What is the sense of telling us about the many mansions in the heavenly country of our inheritance, if our own faults make possession impossible?

No, the power of sin must be broken if we are to reap the benefits of the Incarnation, and the death of Christ is called the Atonement because it was the crowning act whereby the power of sin over men

was broken, so that released souls could recover the possibility of being "at one" with God.

Now this is of the essence of the good news of Christianity : all Christianity and its power of appeal can be stated in a sentence :

" For Christians the chains of sin have been broken and snapped, and those who were once prisoners now receive power to be saved children of God."

This is the whole Christian message. And the first half of it is simply of the most vital importance.

Sin has been broken, its power has been quelled, its victory has been vanquished.

Humanity *was*, it is true, in a wretched state. Sin had choked the avenues by which God's Grace would normally reach man : the doors of the soul were shut against the knocking of God : eyes were too dim to see His approach, ears too deaf to hear His call : man was of himself helpless, stained, unable, disqualified.

There remained indeed a bare possibility of response. The light was not quite quenched, man was " very far gone from original righteousness," but not altogether gone. Yet so dim was the light, so crippled the power of response, that man's strength was (and is, when Grace is rejected) quite unequal to the demands of God upon the soul.

" O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? "

This is the cry of the sinner who has gone deep down and knows his own weakness, and is looking for a salvation which shall come upon him from outside himself, for left to himself he is lost.

With help he can do something (and indeed Christians have to do a good deal), but until help comes he can do nothing, and he knows it.

The Atonement is the name given by the Church to what Christ did for man when He died upon the Cross. The Son of God strikes the first great blow for the freedom of men's souls. Up till now all has been preparation, but here He goes into action.

His death (mysterious as must ever be the full explanation) and the Resurrection were a victory over the powers of sin, and this victory can be shared by His children. For He is Representative Man, the Second Adam, and as such has conquered sin not only actually for Himself but potentially for all that human race He represents and includes: and we by union with Him and by help of His Grace can turn our potential victory into an actual one, sharing His conflict, suffering some of His pain, but enjoying for ever all the ultimate fruits of His victory.

. . . . . .

It is necessary to remember that while the Church has always insisted that sin was conquered and atonement made by the Death of Christ, yet there never has been an official theory or explanation of the Atonement.

It is sufficient for any Christian to say, "I believe that the Death of Christ is the source of my pardon and forgiveness"; there is no necessity to define.

I do not accordingly propose to attempt an explanation of the Atonement, but only to indicate once again some lines which have been helpful to

me personally, and may therefore perhaps help others also to get some insight into the question why the Death of Christ was necessary as an "At-one-ment" between God and man.

(1) Note first that the Atonement was a representative act: we shall understand little till we understand that fact. Jesus acts not simply as Son of God, but as Son of Man, *i.e.* as identified and made one with Humanity. What He does, Humanity does: we do:—because we were really represented in the Humanity He assumed, and in which he died.

For the Atonement was not done for us in the sense of being wholly and for ever outside us and independent of us; it was done *for* us so that in due time it might be done *in* us.

All this may sound pedantic and involved, but it is most necessary to press this point, for the human conscience has revolted, and very rightly, from an Atonement which is in no sense ours.

The problem to be solved is that we ourselves could not have made the Atonement, and yet it must be *our* Atonement: this is only soluble on the lines that He made it representatively on Calvary so that later we might make it our own by sharing it. We might put this as an aphorism. "The Atonement which Christ made is useless for us until we share it."

Jesus indeed paid our ransom in a lump sum on Calvary: but we all must pay our contribution when our turn comes. We could not have paid the lump sum individually or collectively, but in Him we can

pay our contribution, and He enables us to do so by uniting us to Himself and giving us Grace to reproduce the Christ-sacrifice and the Christ-life. That is to say (if we have ears to hear the true and mystical doctrine) Christ is mystically born again in each of us Christians, and taking possession of us (with our most willing consent and co-operation) reproduces in us His life of work and suffering, penitence and Atonement, ending in a resurrection and ascension to the Bosom of God.

"Christ in us" is indeed our hope of Glory.

Therefore—His Atonement was His act: but potentially it was ours too. His actually, ours potentially; He did it then, and we, because we were and are in Him, must do it now, during the days of our earthly life.

To understand the Atonement we must share the Atonement: we can share it because we can share the Life of Christ.

All this may seem a mystery to many, yet it is the ordinary theology of the Incarnation and Atonement; the fact that it is not easy and necessitates some thinking may suggest that perhaps it is not the function of the man-in-the-street to speak the last word in Christian theology, but this is no news to those of us who believe that a true theology is necessary to a sound Christianity.

(2) Consider next the congruity of the Death of Christ with our Christian ideas of sin. Sin to us is no skin-deep affection, as we have already seen. Sin is the inward rebellion, defilement, and disorder by which the conscience is tortured until the sinner

can almost feel the red brand on his brow. Sin to Christians is a pestilence under whose breath the souls of men wither and stagnate. Foul, lifeless waters engulf the soul, all the bright, happy things perish, the light goes out, the darkness reigns ; ideals vanish, effort ceases, hope dies.

This of course seems exaggeration to those who are healthily occupied with their daily work, and indeed is not true, thank God, of multitudes of happy and innocent souls, but I am talking of the experience of really penitent souls in moments of clear vision, and to such sin most clearly appears as spiritual death.

And what can heal such wounds as these ? Nothing cheap, nothing superficial. How congruous, then, it seems to the repentant soul, raw with the sense of defilement, and searching earnestly for *something* high enough and deep enough and piercing enough to atone for his sin, that God should have died for him. To the sheltered or academic mind no doubt this instinctive demand for something terrific to countervail the terrific sense of felt sin seems childish : but sinners who long to be cleansed will think otherwise.

We can now, I think, venture to guess a little why the Death of Christ was necessary.

(1) Perhaps it was the foreseen price and result of a complete obedience to God rendered amid a corrupt society. Most good men suffer ; Socrates, Jeremiah, John the Baptist.

The Perfect Man was perhaps sure to be per-

secuted even to death. And He, knowing this before, that His obedience to the Father would involve His Death, yet persisted because His obedience was necessary for man's salvation. In this sense, then, His Death was necessary, as being a necessary part of His perfect representative and atoning obedience.

(2) Perhaps, in addition, His Death was necessary as a plain and patent advertisement of what God thinks of sin, and suffers because of sin.

Most of us think nothing of it: Jesus on the Cross is the proclamation of what God thinks and suffers; and we must correct our valuations by His.

(3) Certainly, though here we get right on to the threshold of mystery, the Death was the outward visible sign of an inward and spiritual struggle with the forces which underlie and issue in sin.

The whole setting of the Passion points to the coming of a dread crisis: not the crisis of personal suffering (that was nothing to Him, the nails nought, the scourge nought) but of an encounter with spiritual forces of evil that called for the utmost solicitude and endurance.

There is no explanation of the cry, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" except that at that minute He was (though innocent Himself), as humanity's Friend and Representative, at grips with a most deadly and awful foe, who for a moment—while man's salvation seemed to rock in the balance—appeared to be getting the upper hand.[1]

[1] *Cf.* Newman, *Discourses to Mixed Congregations.* (Longmans.)

This is no doubt the most difficult line on which to seek light on the Atonement : yet it is one which on reflection seems to lead deepest towards the heart of the mystery.

(4) Perhaps there is truth also in the suggestion that the Passion is an exhibition in time and space of some mysterious conflict within the Life of God Himself, Who—to forgive man's sin—had to reconcile the outgoing of mercy with the just assertion and vindication of His own essential holiness.

Here again we enter the region of guess-work, yet the hypothesis is dignified, and well worth meditation and study.

No clear-cut solution of the Atonement is possible: none is official : all are worth reverent consideration: yet the fact and the fact alone is a necessity of Christian belief.[1]

But we must be careful to remember that the Atonement is more than an isolated Act for the pardon of guilt.

It has its intimate connection with Grace, the New Life which is to be imparted to men. It has its effect upon the character of Grace. For, in Jesus, it was *our* Humanity which paid the price and atoned for sin. And it is this Humanity, now redeemed, glorified, and exalted to the Right Hand of God, which Jesus wills us to share, and imparts to us as Grace. By partaking of It, by being enfolded and included in It, we share its quality of innocence and sanctity : it is a stainless

[1] For a study of the Atonement see the four tremendous sermons (Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9) in Dr. Holland's *Logic and Life*. (Longmans.)

Humanity we enter and share at our Baptism: the sap of the Vine into which we are engrafted has a quality and complexion of acceptance with God which we, by incorporation, share.

That quality of cleansing power was won by the Atonement. The other quality of glory and energy was won at the Resurrection. Therefore we must pass on to the Resurrection and see how Humanity-in-Jesus, which has won forgiven-ness for us by the Atonement, is raised again in new Life and power before being imparted by the Holy Spirit to the redeemed members of Christ.

CHAPTER VII

THE RESURRECTION AND THE ASCENSION

By the Death of Christ, then, the power of sin was broken : the chains fell off humanity, and men were free to rise. No doubt much remained to be done : the Atonement to be shared, a new life to be lived. But the whole situation was changed ; things were no longer hopeless. Before, men could neither make nor share an Atonement, nor could they initiate any fruitful efforts, nor could they look forward to any certain joy or hope in the life beyond : now they could arise and recommence their upward pilgrimage to God with real courage and hope because the pardon was purchased and the powers of evil defeated. But let us beware of thinking that even the Atonement is the end. Not so ; it is the first chapter of the book of Redemption, not the last. A mistake here will lead us into many pitfalls : into Antinomianism, for instance, the heresy that teaches that because Christ died, we need not die to sin ; or into the disparagement of good works as part of a living faith ; or into wrong estimates of Grace.

No. The Atonement has no doubt overthrown Giant Despair, and his late prisoners are certainly

free to go out, nor can he touch them unless they return to him of their own will: yet their redemption is by no means complete. The trembling prisoners must be brought into the light of day: someone must "wash their stripes" and chafe their stiff limbs: loving hands must minister to their needs: they must be moulded and educated and inspired until a new life and spirit is theirs, so that they can do a man's work and play a man's part in the new life and atmosphere of Christian freedom and responsibility. This is the work of Grace, it has yet to be done.

Therefore it is that we do not rest our hopes upon a dead Lord Who once died on the Tree. Were His death the end we should despair, but death was not the end. Christianity as a religion is not the religion of a death, but of One who was dead but is Risen, and is alive for evermore. And so this Lord who was clothed with our humanity in the days of His humiliation still wears our humanity in glory, and all the day long stretches forth His hands to those brethren of the human race whose nature He assumed and for whom He died. For He longs with divine desire to endow them with that Grace which is His own communicated Life, in order that being in Him (as He in them) they may share His eternal and glorious Life for ever.

. . . . . .

Yes: but are we sure of the Resurrection?

People often ask us this in a tone which demands that our answer should express a certainty which could only be ours if we had experienced it our-

selves or at least had seen it with our own eyes. In a similar way people ask us if we are sure about Anglican Orders, and expect us to answer with that downright assurance which no doubt we should have obtained if we had watched the ordinations and had been endowed with a special faculty for observing the right intentions of the consecrators.

In the two cases our answer would be much the same. We have such reasonable grounds for believing these things, that we are willing to live and die for the truth of them. More we cannot say, yet neither can we say less. No doubt if, like Thomas, we had handled the Risen Lord, our faith would have partaken more of the nature of sight: as it is, our belief is based on grounds and perspectives differing from those which produced so great faith in the Apostles, yet it does not follow that we are more uncertain than they. Speaking for myself I profess my whole-hearted belief in the Resurrection of Jesus, and though I do not of course say that I understand how it occurred, nor can I necessarily reconcile all the points in the different narratives of the Resurrection, yet without any mental reservation I accept the statement of the Creed: "was crucified, dead and buried. . . . The third day He rose again from the dead."

And the main arguments for the fact of the Resurrection one can state quite simply.

(1) There is the witness of those who saw Him on certain occasions after He rose from the dead. S. Paul mentions some of these occasions.

"That He appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve;

then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep ; then He appeared unto James, then to all the Apostles, and last of all He appeared to me also" (1 Corinthians xv. 5).

Here we find a man citing as witnesses of a fact no less than the major part of five hundred persons, as well as such leading and recognised personalities as Peter and James. Can it be possible that if he was wrong he was not contradicted at once ?

Why should there be a conspiracy of silence to bolster up a belief which, far from bringing any temporal advantages to the holders, only exposed them to persecution and death ?

I think it is fair to say that, among critics, opinion is veering towards full acceptance of the reality of the appearance and the honesty of the witnesses.

The expedients to which some critics have had to resort to nullify the evidence in favour of orthodox belief are so desperate that they are largely being abandoned. Even those who find a difficulty in "the empty Tomb" are willing to accept the Resurrection appearances of our Lord as "objective," that is they were no self-stimulated visions of excited disciples, but the "result of some external stimulus," *i.e.* real visions of a really present Lord.

Well : we believe that those appearances were real, and we believe that trustworthy men have handed down the story.

(2) There is also the supporting evidence of what is called "the empty Tomb."

The Christian explanation of the emptiness of the Tomb is that the dead Christ was risen, and therefore of course the Tomb was empty. Yet this incident is a great stumbling-block to many whose difficulty really and only consists in the fact that dead persons do not normally rise from their graves. Therefore, say they, let us look for some possible explanation which, though we believe in the appearances to the disciples, and though we believe in the continued life of Jesus of Nazareth, will yet enable us to side-track the difficulty of the transmutation of the earthly Body into a transformed and spiritualised Body.

Yet when all facts are taken into consideration (the Appearances: the rise of the Church: subsequent Christian history: the lives of the Saints) is it not true that the Resurrection explanation of the empty Tomb is the easier? Otherwise, where was the Body of the Lord? "In the keeping of the Apostles or furtively buried by them." But people do not die for the truth of what they know to be a lie. What possible object could the persecuted Early Church have possessed, to make them proclaim as true something which by their own action they knew to be untrue?

Can one really imagine S. Peter whispering to S. James of the necessity of keeping the secret intact? "Mind you don't tell." No: the disciples did not bury the Lord on the sly.

"The Romans or the Jews buried the body." Why then was it not produced? "Why was the proclamation" (of Christ's Resurrection) "met only

by persecution, when an obvious remedy was at hand?"[1]

No, again. The Jews and the Romans had not got the Lord's Body, or they would have produced it, and Christianity would have survived less than a month.

Candidly considering all evidence, the Resurrection theory of the empty Tomb is historically its most probable explanation: who can wonder, then, if we Christians find therein a most powerful buttress to our conviction that Christ rose from the dead?

(3) We are right also to remember that the mere fact of the existence of the Church gives most weighty testimony to the truth of the Resurrection.

If S. Paul had appealed to no witnesses, he could still have appealed to a mighty fact. From what did the Church of Christ start? What was its charter? What was its foundation-belief? The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We all know the Good Friday picture. The Lord apparently a failure: the disciples scattered and gone. "They all forsook Him and fled." The vision of the earthly kingdom with the Messiah at its head had vanished into thin air. If ever a cause looked lost, it was then. Yet within fifty days behold a miracle: the cowards are heroes, the despairing are triumphant, the losers are victors,

[1] Armitage Robinson, *Journal of Theological Studies*, Jan. 1913. The whole article would repay reading.

"rejoicing that they were worthy to suffer shame for His Name." How comes all this to be?

Surely if no great overwhelming fact had occurred it would have been many long and painful years before the discredited and disconcerted followers of Christ had recovered—I will not say their belief in their Master, but even their own self-respect, or confidence in their own sanity—they who had followed as Messiah a crucified peasant. But in fifty-three days they were out in the street, preaching, converting, suffering, rejoicing. Why? We say, as they said, "Because He has risen from the dead." And certainly their beliefs seemed justified by the results they saw. The harvest ripened under their very hands. They saw the growth of a new spirit of confidence in God and fraternity toward men. They saw sinners turning from sin, and the darkness of their souls changing into light. They noted how cowards became brave, and the weak strong. They found that where pagan culture left gloom, Christian faith brought joy and peace. And above all they were impressed with the evident fact of the presence of a new Power among them, which turned defeat into victory, and gave sinners the strength to turn from sin to righteousness, from the vanities and immoralities of paganism to the worship of the Living God. And this religion of theirs, so powerful and invigorating, so heartening and enlightening, so sweet and comforting, was founded on one single rock and foundation, the Resurrection of their Lord from the dead.

And we, the spiritual descendants of the first

Christians, as we reckon up the evidences for the truth of the traditions we inherit, keep the Resurrection as the corner-stone of our holy faith, not simply because early Saints of the Church believed it, but because without that belief the Church of God would never have existed at all.

So we believe in the Resurrection. We believe that He rose from the dead "changed but essentially the same," His material Body having become a spiritual Body.

And when He had finished the forty days of His appearances in this "higher mode of human existence," He departed from His friends in such a way that it was clear to them that He had gone back to the Father, and would walk with them on earth no more.

So God has finished another great Act of Salvation, and another stage in the work of man's redemption is passed and over. Jesus, clothed in our humanity (which He has redeemed and glorified, and intends to impart to men) is exalted to Heaven, and from thence He means to finish the work of Grace which began at the Incarnation and has been furthered by the Atonement, Resurrection and Ascension. We think of Him still human, but in Glory: longing always to save His children.

All is now ready; Grace is available for man to receive: but *how* will He impart it? What will be His method? What is the next step? How can man lay hold on Grace? How can he share the glorified Life of his Saviour?

CHAPTER VIII

PENTECOST AND THE NEW LIFE

AFTER the Ascension, Pentecost—the Mission of the Spirit: the next Great Act of God. And here again I should like to pause a little because the average English Churchman has thought very little about the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Most of us have heard phrases like "the temporal mission of the Holy Ghost"; all of us recollect the "tongues of fire" and the sonorous passage in the Acts about "Parthians, Medes, and Elamites"; some of us know the "Veni Creator Spiritus" by heart; here our attainments stop rather abruptly.

Some will say this does not matter: these inquiries are only for professional theologians: yet it is for lack of knowledge about the Holy Ghost and His work that a great link in the chain of redemption has been largely ignored, and endless mischief and misunderstandings have arisen. For example: part of the work of the Spirit is to inspire the Church, which is thus seen to be the organ of the Spirit, who is its underlying "Lifegiver," Sustainer, Guide, and Sanctifier.

Yet one hears people complain that the Church is put between the soul and God; yet how can this

be so far as the Mind and Voice of the Church is the Mind and Voice of the Holy Spirit?

We all know, I trust, that the Voice of the Church is not identical with the voice of any individual Churchman, or of any individual part of the Church Universal; we know also that the Mind of the Church, like the mind of democracy or of "the Country" is not always obvious, or easy to ascertain at any given moment. Yet just as the Voice of a people *is* in the long run ascertainable and *does* prevail, so with the Church. There is a Voice of the Church and a Mind and Will of the Church, but these are not the expressions of anything merely and exclusively human, but are the effects and results of the underlying power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Hence the Mind of the Church, if really ascertained to be such and not only the expression of opinion of one or more individuals, can never come "between a soul and God." You might as well say that a man's vocal chords came between him and his song: or that an artist's eye and hand came between him and his picture. "Vox populi vox Dei" may be a controversial dogma, but Churchmen have never doubted that the true "Vox ecclesiæ" is the Voice of the Holy Spirit Who works through and in the Body—the Church.

I will therefore try to state the Christian doctrine of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit as simply and accurately as possible, because an intelligent understanding and appreciation of Grace, and the Life in Grace, is not attainable if one neglects so

vital a link as the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Who is the Holy Ghost?

(1) For Christian theology the Holy Spirit is God: the Third Person in the Holy Trinity: proceeding eternally from the Father and the Son; the Bond of Love between the Father and the Son.

I will not venture upon abstruse points which are very rightly and necessarily to be dealt with by the mystic or the theological expert, but are not suitable for my present purpose. Yet it is worth notice that the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity is no lightly-assumed hypothesis which every schoolboy may discard when he comes of age, but is the nearest approach to the exact truth about the Being of the God of Love which the Church, brooding over revelation and mindful of true philosophy, can compass. One can but marvel at the self-confidence of the individual who lightly dismisses that central dogma of Christianity wherein so many theologians and scholars, mystics and Saints, have found the crown of their philosophy and the object of their adoration.

[It is also perhaps worth while making one remark on the dispute between the Eastern and the Western Church concerning the difficult question of the "Procession" of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son ("Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son"—Nicene Creed). We cannot go wrong if we remember that while the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the

Son, the ultimate source of His Being is the Father.[1]]

(2) This Holy Spirit, Whom the Church and Holy Scripture describe as God,[2] was at work in the world before Jesus was Incarnate. "Who spake by the Prophets," as the Nicene Creed says.

We trace His work in Creation (Genèsis i. 3) as well as in the manifestations of spirituality such as were exhibited by the prophets and other Saints of the Old Testament.

The gradual upward evolution of man, both physical, moral, and spiritual, we believe to have been the work of the Spirit Who supplied to Creation that external stimulus to which the evolution of man has been the response.

But this work of the Spirit was neither full nor final. Joel anticipates (Joel ii. 28), Christ promises (Acts i. 5), the Apostles announce (Acts ii. 33), the Acts describe (*e.g.* Acts viii. 17), the arrival of the Spirit in His fullness (Acts ii. 1–4).

(3) The "Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost" flows from, and was made possible by, the Ascension to Glory of the Incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ.[3]

Before this the Holy Ghost had acted in the world by His universal operations in Creation and mankind generally, but now He comes through the Incarnate Son in a special and personal way : to do what we might call His Christian work. He is spoken of by S. Peter, *e.g.*, as a Person. "Thou

[1] For the whole subject see Darwell Stone's *Outlines of Christian Dogma* (Longmans), pp. 28–30 ; 276–278.

[2] *e.g.* Acts v. 3.

[3] *Cf.* S. John vii. 39.

hast not lied unto men but unto God" (Acts v. 4).

He comes into the world of men at Pentecost that he may uplift them to heights hitherto unattainable, that their visions and dreams of holiness and godliness may become fulfilled in actuality; He descends from the glorified Jesus that He may instil the celestial Life of Jesus into men's terrestrial lives, until they ultimately slough the merely terrestrial and reach the divine life. It is the work of the Spirit to "deify" men into Christ.

And the manner of His coming was thus: Jesus was gone, but He had not deserted His friends. His work was only half done: the price was paid, but man had so far not profited by it; the machinery for making Saints was ready, but it had not started its actual work.

So the disciples were to go to Jerusalem and there wait: not simply pondering on the past Atonement, nor absorbed in the past Resurrection, but expectant, alert, on tiptoe, for something more—the promise of the Father, the coming of the Holy Ghost.

And on Pentecost the promise was redeemed and fulfilled when the Spirit came in power and with outward symbol of flame, and the Church of God set forth on her great pilgrimage with joy in her heart and power in her hands.

In those days we hear no complaints of the meagreness of the Spirit's gift. The pages of the Acts which record the working of the Spirit in the Church contain no grumblings as to the absence of

power. Never was a record written more full of happiness and health than this; we feel envious when we read it. "Why not to-day?" we say as we contrast the feebleness of our Christianity with the fervid zeal and power of the first age of the Church; yet it comforts us to think that it is only ourselves who are in fault, the Spirit is still among us and still the same: who knows if we ourselves, if we hold on, may not yet see the Spirit of power and love repossessing His Church?

. . . . . .

Is it possible to summarise the work which the Holy Spirit has been doing among us since Pentecost?

No doubt He works in a thousand ways we half-know or do not know at all. Yet there are three main lines on which He seems to do His work for souls.

(1) He works at the heart of men like a vision works in the heart of an artist, drawing men, half unconsciously, to their ideal, which is Christ.

All strivings after better things: all glimpses of ideals: all longings to be pure and clean: all love of the good, the true, the honest, the just: all the kindliness of pity, all the nobility of generosity: all denials of self-interest for the public good: all the desire to work for the good of all: all the hungerings and thirstings after God and His Love and His righteousness—these are but the Spirit energising in man and desiring to take possession of the soul in order to educate it and lead it and deify it. This is all the work of the Spirit as He works with Actual

Grace in order to make men Christians, or to make Christians better.

(2) He is the Power within and behind the Church. For the Church of God is not a mere aggregate of persons, a mob: nor is it simply a human Society. It is a Society whose Head is Jesus, and the members all share in the glorified Life of that Head. Therefore the Church is an entity: an organism: linked up with its Head it has an organic life: one can almost think of the Church as a person, because it is inspired by a Person. And the life of the Church, the breath in its body (so to speak), without which the Church would be a corpse and not a living organism, is the Holy Spirit.

He is the Sustainer, the Guide, the Sanctifier of the Church: He comforts her members in their sorrows, He kindles the fire of Divine Love in their hearts.

The teaching of the Church, its authority, its claim upon us, all depend simply and entirely on the Spirit acting in and through the Church.

It was clearly so in the Early Church: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." So to-day at the ordination of every deacon: "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration?" It is always the same. The Power behind the Church is the Holy Spirit: otherwise we should snap our fingers at the Church whenever we liked. Men

wonder why we respect and obey the Church's known and proved commands. It is because the Church on earth may be a Society of human persons, yet its ultimate voice and verdict is the utterance of the Holy Ghost. If otherwise, where is the fulfilment of the Lord's promise that He would guide His friends into all truth by the Holy Spirit ?

(3) The Holy Spirit is also the Power behind the Sacraments : their invisible Consecrator and Administrator. For in the long chain of redemption we come at last to the point when the Soul that needs Grace receives Grace and enters the Life of Christ—and that point is reached in Sacraments duly received. Sacraments are the last chapter in the bestowal of Grace, all after that is Epilogue. Here at last by Baptism the redeemed are grafted into Christ, here they are fed with His spiritual Body and Blood.

And in these Sacraments it is the Holy Ghost Who really baptizes, really consecrates, really administers.

He too it is Who, because He is Christ's Agent to, and in, the Church, counteracts the unworthiness of any individual minister so that we are sure that no soul who goes convertedly to the Sacraments can be really harmed by the unworthiness of the human agent, since the Holy Spirit Himself is the invisible Consecrator. The human factor is reduced to a minimum : for the Holy Spirit is behind the Sacramental ordinances of the Church.

. . . . . .

It will be necessary to give much further con-

sideration to the subjects of the Church and the Sacraments, but they need chapters to themselves.

I would, however, not wish to end this chapter without three necessary notes.

(1) The sudden dramatic arrival of the Holy Spirit on the first Whitsunday was one of those sudden catastrophic events which intersperse God's long, slow, patient dealings with His creation.

Things tend a certain way: there are signs and indications that something is going to happen: people begin to guess and anticipate: and then something happens.

"At one stride comes the dark."

It was so with the Incarnation—men had hoped and conjectured that perhaps God would visit His people; the heathen prophesied of a wonderful child who should inaugurate a new golden age: the Jews spoke of a mysterious Presence of God revealing Himself from time to time to the chosen race. And then swiftly and surely, before men could awake to the fact that the day had come, the Lord was born of Mary. So it was with the "Nativity of the Spirit"—to use St. Augustine's phrase. The expectation of a new Power, who would make ideals possible and enable dreamers to realise their dreams, was no new thing. Yet suddenly it happens, and the Spirit is here. No doubt what we call the Judgment Day will be similar in character. It is already anticipated in many ways: by the voice of conscience, by the verdicts of history, by the particular judgments on persons and nations.

Jerusalem was sacked; the Roman Empire did perish. One day the Day of Days will come, and all anticipatory and partial "days" shall be summed and completed in the Day of the Lord.

Thus we shall not be offended or surprised when we see that the Holy Spirit arrived with dramatic suddenness and completeness, fulfilling at a blow age-long hopes and anticipations. It is God's way of working.

(2) We should note that in the earliest days of the Church very little distinction was made between Jesus and the Spirit of Jesus. The doctrine of the Trinity, valid as it is by the true theological verdict of the Church, was not yet consciously worked out. Jesus was ascended: Jesus was among them by His Spirit: the Spirit of Jesus was at work in the world; this was the feeling among the early Christians.

It was only by the long and mature reflections of the Church upon the various revelations of God about Himself that the doctrine of the blessed Trinity came to be formulated.

(3) The victory of the Church and of individual Christians depends almost entirely on a vivid belief in the presence and energy of the Holy Spirit.

To dwell exclusively on a once-dead Saviour is not a religion of life. To believe in the presence among us of the Spirit of the Living Jesus, working, stimulating, revivifying, linking up the Church to its Saviour and bringing every member into vital union with Him—this is a living religion which can save and redeem.

For we have suffered too much from a stuffy and

dull materialism : we have been taught overmuch about the rigid laws of antecedents and consequences, heredity and environment. Dreams have been at a discount : visions and romance have been reckoned poor substitutes for hard cash.

Let us with all our strength resist this disheartening and vulgar pessimism, which seeks to establish and endow an unspiritual and mechanical ideal.

Our birthright is to be free to be good. Goodness, strong and beautiful, is the finest thing in the world. If we despise mere material luxury and satisfaction, and seek after something finer, grander, nobler, we shall find it. If we demand the new Jerusalem, we shall get it. Why ? Because of the presence in the world of the Holy Spirit of Jesus.

It is He Who will give ultimate victory to the Church, as also to every cause which seeks goodness, justice, and truth. It is He Who will guide each of us, and enable us to find our true vocation in life : that "vocation" which is not the exclusive property of the clergy, but means that God has a true line of life for every man to follow. It is the Holy Spirit Who will take us in hand and deal with us, guiding our faltering footsteps and caring for us till He brings us to heaven. It is He Who in His good time will reunite the Church of God. We may well thank God for Pentecost.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH: THE SPHERE OF GRACE

If we really believe in the divine mission of the Holy Spirit, we shall believe that He came to fulfil the Mind and carry out the wishes of the ascended Saviour.

And as soon as we begin to study His operations in the Early Church it becomes luminously clear that Christians were never dealt with or looked upon as individuals, but as members of Christ who were also members of one another as belonging to the same Body.

Christianity, we may plainly assert, knows of no simply individualistic salvation: we are saved as belonging to a spiritual community, a fellowship, a Church, which is in union with Christ.

This is now accepted as certain even by theologians who are not generally accused of orthodoxy, as *e.g.* by Professor Royce, whose recently published lectures on *The Problem of Christianity* make central the doctrine of "loyalty to the Beloved Community, the realm of which is the realm of Grace." And indeed if one can grasp the idea of a wonderful society, partly divine partly human, knit up into Christ by mystical yet very real links and bands, in which we have fellowship with Him and also with one another,

it does marvellously enrich and dignify our conception of the Christian religion.

For after all, the search for individual salvation comes perilously near selfishness: if a man is out just to save his own soul (and perhaps a few others by the way) it is not particularly inspiring: one feels that many men of the world have deeper and truer ideals than this. Many who are not Christians do care deeply about the solidarity of mankind and the need of corporate welfare if they themselves are ever to be really happy or at ease.

But if you can catch a glimpse of yourself as a member of, and as subordinate to, a great divine-human Society which is meant to include and save the whole world, here at least is an ideal worth having, a cause for which one might well spend one's life-blood.

But this idea of the Church as a Body, a corporation, so very clear and inspiring to many of us ("The Church, which is His Body"—Eph. i. 23), is yet a matter of great difficulty to others, and that in spite of the fact that, in the parallel spheres of politics and social life, mere individualism is bankrupt and the corporate idea reigns supreme. I must therefore try to summarise as exhaustively as space permits the orthodox teaching about the Church.

I wish I could embody wholesale the excellent summary given by Mr. Gillett in *The Claims and Promise of the Church*, pp. 1–10, 19–30, but perhaps it is better to use one's own words and arrangement, though I could not really do better than transfer bodily the results of his clear thinking and easy style.

What then do I mean when I say I am a Churchman?

(1) I assert (*e.g.* in the Apostles' Creed) that I belong to a visible society of persons, an institution, a historic body, known to history as the Catholic Church of Christ.

This society is as solid and concrete a body as the Army or Navy.

If I belong to the Church of England I further assert that the Church of England is part of, and only has value as being part of, this Universal Christian Society.

And whatever difficulties there may be in defining the Holy Catholic Church, there is no ambiguity at all about its origin and growth. It started as a going concern on the Day of Pentecost, when its members were possessed and formed into a Kingdom of the Spirit by the Holy Spirit Himself. Its growth is photographed in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. Its officers were the Apostles, its members the baptized believers in Jesus.[1]

And the principal employment of Jesus during His three years' ministrations had been the preparation of this Society. He had chosen its original members: He had lived among them until they were impregnated with His spirit and outlook: He returned to them after the Resurrection and for forty days taught them the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

[1] *Cf.* that indispensable book *The People of God* (Hamilton: published by the Oxford University Press), vol. ii. pp. 24–39, 76–92, Appendix Note I, and *passim*.

Then at Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon these selected individuals in such a way as to link them up into their Ascended Head, and render them—no longer merely individual believers—but parts of a living organism, members of the living Church of Christ.

I shall be speaking of the mystical aspect of the Church in a moment, but let it be quite clear so far that the Church, being a visible society and organisation, resembles all other visible organisations in possessing (as a necessity of existence and successful working) its own officers, rules, mode of entry, and benefits. Who ever heard of a society which did not possess all these? How could we even picture a corporation without officers? any club without some proper mode of entry? Such do not exist.

Therefore we shall expect to find, we should be dumbfounded not to find, that the Church has always possessed these necessary accessories as a condition of being a human society at all. To wish to do without any such, is to decline into individualism and a bastard and un-Christian mysticism, as well as to contradict the evidence of the Acts and the plain descriptions of history.

So when I say I belong to the Church, I say it with the same pride and pleasure, and with the same definite corporate meaning, as another says he belongs to the Navy, or to the Household Brigade: and I have just the same feeling of belonging to a body. I have the same intention of loyally obeying the reasonable and valid orders of the Church and its officers, as a subaltern has

of obeying the War Office and his colonel: I believe that I entered the Church at my baptism as a recruit enters the army by enlistment: I hope to receive the benefits of power and Grace as the soldier receives pay, pension, and honour—and all this because the Church on its visible side is a concrete definite organisation of human beings for spiritual ends and purposes.

It is probably almost the greatest need of English Churchpeople that they should clarify their minds about the meaning and obligations of Churchmanship; the general vagueness on the point is responsible for three quarters of the apathy and amateurishness of which the Church of England is so often accused.

(2) When I say I am a Churchman I also express my belief and hope that I and all other Churchpeople belong to an invisible society of holy souls. For the Church has its visible and invisible aspects —just as Jesus was both God and Man, or as a man is corporal and spiritual, or as a nation has a soul and a corporate embodiment thereof—these aspects do not contradict each other.

There is an invisible Church, the soul of the Church, whose members are known only to God, and consist of those souls who are in a state of Grace, whether living on earth or elsewhere. These souls have union with Christ, and in Christ have union one with another: these are the living and growing branches who—with all the other branches —share the Life and Sap of the Vine, and in the Vine are one tree. These form the true Mystical

Body of Christ, for they alone fully share His Life and are "in" Him. Yet this mystical and invisible Church naturally and inevitably expresses itself on the stage of human life and action as the visible and imperfect Church of history, just as, *e.g.*, the invisible military soul of the German people concretes itself into an army, or the invisible naval soul of England into a navy.

Though there is, of course, behind the visible German army an invisible military soul or spirit, yet unless it expressed itself in terms of a visible army with officers and men, rules, mode of entry, benefits (for Germany and therefore for each German) it would not be a human army at all: it would never get to work or be of the slightest use in this work-a-day and terrestrial world in which God has placed us. So with the Church: there is an invisible soul to it, to which I pray God that we all belong: unless we do, our membership in the visible Church will be useless to ourselves and harmful to our cause; but on the other hand, if we aspire to belong to the soul of the Church, that soul has, by the Lord's appointment, its corporal embodiment in the Catholic Church of Scripture and history, and in that visible Church we must take our place and do our duty as conditions of being also included in that soul of the Church which expresses itself in the Body.

Do not despise the visible, the concrete, the terrestrial, the imperfect. Such has been ever the marked tendency of heretics. It was the Manichæans who despised the human body and counted

it evil: it is false asceticism alone which despises the body.

Do not turn your back on the wheat field because it contains tares also. To do so would be to embrace a false kind of mysticism (only too common in history) which despises the Church as too patient of tares, and despises the Sacraments because of their homeliness and their universality of invitation.

And to despise the normal and the concrete is no light mistake. The futility of much Eastern asceticism: the inhumanity and powerlessness of much Christianity: the priggishness and self-centredness of many pious people (who think that the Church of God is only an invisible Church of completely saved souls, themselves being well inside) springs from contempt of the body and the Body—the human body of our flesh, and the visible Body the Church. To accept the concrete as true and God-given (was not the Incarnation the concreting of the Spiritual?) while ever striving to spiritualise the concrete until it is perfected, is the method of the Christian religion. Otherwise one heads straight for the gates of heresy.

(3) Therefore, when I say I am a Churchman, I am asserting that in this world you cannot radically dissever the twin ideas of the visible and invisible Church. To do so is to attempt the uprooting of the tares, which we are expressly forbidden to do. So let it be quite clear that as members of the Church we assert our membership in a visible Church which normally carries with it (and ideally always carries with it) membership in that invisible

company of saintly souls known only to God. As to the members of that invisible company we are not the judges: our business is not to separate the visible and invisible—but to hold them together, knowing that by being good members of the visible Church we shall have our part in the Church invisible.

Meanwhile our business is to live in and serve our great Divine-human Society—the visible and historical Catholic Church, the mystical and spiritual Body of Christ.

(4) And, finally, in asserting our membership in the visible and mystical Body of Christ, we assert that we are within the sphere of Grace, and are already partakers (unless exiles through sin) of Eternal Life.

For by incorporation into Christ I share the Life of Christ, and what else is Eternal Life save complete union with Christ for all and myself, under perfect conditions?

We have, I trust, outgrown our limited and unworthy conceptions of Eternal Life. It is not mere individual satisfaction: nor perpetual idleness: nor glorified laziness and stagnation. We know little in detail of what it means, but it must consist of a deepening growth into God through and in Christ, and will be accompanied by a corresponding output of love and praise, joy and usefulness.

But this ideal is not wholly future: the roots of it were planted deep when the Grace of God entered the soul at Baptism: and though most of the branches and nearly all the flowers and fruit belong

to the future, yet enough is already ours to give us endurance and hope and joy.

This—as we can never assert too frequently—is the secret of a real Christian's restfulness and inner security: ours is no precarious tenancy: when we entered the Church we entered on an inheritance, we are already occupiers and owners of Eternal Life, and if we are ever to be turned out of our holding it will only be because by our own wilfulness or criminal neglect we have thrown our baptismal heritage away.

Such being the Church, what link does it form in the chain by which the Grace of God is transmitted to men?

It is the sphere of Grace: the territory to which Grace is native: the normal field of the operations of the Holy Ghost.

We seek Grace in the Church of God as naturally as we go to a garden for flowers or to a shop for goods.

Is this too definite? Yet consider the results of indefiniteness. We hear that so few are confirmed in proportion to the professedly Christian population. Why? Because of under-definiteness: people do not know what they receive when they come to Confirmation.

If there was clearer teaching that in Confirmation the Holy Spirit comes to possess a soul, and endow it with His sevenfold gifts of Grace, there would perhaps be more and certainly better Confirmations.

We hear again that men who go to the Colonies

cease to be communicants. Why? Because they have never definitely grasped Whom they received, when they made their Communions.

Again we know all too well the vagueness and nebulosity of much Churchmanship. Why is it so? Because there has been too little grasp of the Church as the Visible and Mystical Society of Jesus, the Sphere of Grace, the Kingdom of the Spirit. Yet the Church of God is indeed the real Salvation Army, meant to win recruits, and endow them with those Gifts of Grace which—if responded to—will enable them to reproduce Christ's Life and fight Christ's battles: the Church is the real wise Householder, ever freshly bringing forth from her treasury the great treasures, ever new and old, which have been entrusted to her for the welfare of mankind—the gifts of Grace which she is commanded to proclaim and administer to all who will receive them.

Let us then cherish our Churchmanship: let us recognise the Church as the Sphere of the Spirit, the Home of Grace.

CHAPTER X

THE SACRAMENTS: THE MEANS OF GRACE

THE life of the Christian is to be the reproduction of the Life of the Lord. But in this we shall fail if left to ourselves, so He comes to us, and will live in us, and will reproduce in us (if we will let Him) His own Life of action and suffering, resurrection and glory.

In each of us He must be born, in each of us He must suffer and rise, in each of us He will reign for ever—if we are to be truly His.

Every mystic knows this truth. S. Paul elaborates it again and again for the edification of the Church. "My little children, for whom I labour until Christ be formed in you": "Christ in you the hope of glory."

And all these truths work out to the same conclusion as we reached before, that we are meant to live "in" Christ, and to share His Grace in all its forms: the Actual Grace which leads to mystical union with Christ, and the Habitual Grace in which Christ's own Life is imparted to and shared by us.

But what is the point—definite and actual—by which a soul touches Christ's Glorified Life and receives this inflow of the Life of Christ which con-

stitutes the bestowal of Grace, and incorporation into Christ? We have considered God's patient preparations to give us Grace; at what point do we actually receive it?

And the answer is, "In the Sacraments." The inflow of the Life of Christ comes through the right reception of the Sacraments. Sacraments are the means of Grace, the last link in the great chain, the media whereby the Soul receives its Saviour, shares His Incarnate Life, and is at home in Him, as far as in this world is possible.

Hence we understand why S. John the Baptist, greatest of prophets, was less than the least who is inside the Kingdom of Grace. He received Actual Grace—no man more—but he never entered the sphere of Habitual Grace. The Holy Spirit was not come in His fullness when John died: the Church did not exist: the Sacraments were not instituted, so the Life of Jesus was not yet communicated to His members, *i.e.* Grace was not bestowed. And John died, not having received the promises, wherefore the humblest Christian child is greater than he, not of course by merit, but because now the treasuries of Grace are open, and the Life of Grace is free to all.

What, then, are these mysterious Sacraments by whose right reception we receive into ourselves the very Life of Christ Himself? We must be very clear about this, for could there be a more vital matter for Christians?

The Sacraments through which the Risen Life of Christ is verily and indeed taken and received by us,

are the Gospel Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians iii. 27), "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him" (S. John vi. 56), "For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed" (S. John vi. 55).

We need not labour the various quotations and scriptural references, for the verdict and consensus of the whole Church have been absolute and final. If we are to put a different interpretation and construction on the meaning of Baptism and Holy Communion, it can only be by contradicting the universal testimony of the Church from the beginning.

In Baptism, the man or woman is born again, is regenerate. He takes his place within the redeemed and glorified Life of Christ. His sins are washed away because he now receives the "forgiven-ness" which is his through his union with the all-holy Humanity of Christ. He is born again into a new Life because he shares the glorified Life of the Risen Humanity of Jesus, and thus is "a new creature."

By the same act of incorporation into Christ, he is made free of the fellowship and society of all others who share that Life in Christ—that is, he is made a member of the Church.

To put this in simpler language. As the baptized person rises from the symbolic washing and dipping in water the Church assures him that he has actually received (through the Holy Spirit's action and

power) all that the Baptism symbolises—His sins are forgiven, he has risen to a new life in Christ Who is now the Guest in his soul, the Companion in his pilgrimage to God.

Perhaps of all these implications of Baptism the most central and vivid is the receiving of a new life, a new birth. No longer do the baptized belong to the old Adam, they partake of Christ, they are "in" Christ: another branch has been grafted into the Vine.

How odd all this must seem to much current Churchmanship! Baptism is no doubt retained pretty generally, but how often only as a social act or as a relic of bygone reverence and custom. Picture yourself explaining to some mothers on the way home from the christening, that the child was now incorporated into the Life of Christ, and was therefore greater than John the Baptist, or any other saint of the old dispensation. Wouldn't you be thought a rather peculiar person, a little odd about religion? And yet your statement would be literally true. For, prior to Baptism, the child was just a human being—a child of God by nature, but not in Christ by Grace. The human nature it has inherited is not altogether a beautiful thing, its ancestry is by no means spotless, it contains the possibility of much evil: it needs Regeneration.

And then Baptism. The child is put into Christ: the seed of Eternal Life is planted: the possibilities of saintliness are bestowed: and the child is a new creature because it shares nothing less than the Life of Christ Himself. Henceforth the baptized are

Christians, "in Christ," partakers of Christ's Life, inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Of course the opponents of the Christian religion would deny all this, but no Churchman ought to do so. For this is the simply literal teaching of the Bible and the Prayer-book, as well as the traditional teaching of the Universal Church. So anyone who reads this book, and thinks its statements true, will not be surprised to find that in the Early Church Baptism was regarded as a matter of supreme and unique importance. Of course it was, if it conferred New Life in Christ—forgiveness—membership in the Church.[1]

The Acts of the Apostles are a record not only of the numbers of the baptized, but of the extraordinary importance and regard attached to Baptism. And, indeed, if Baptism is the final link in the chain of redeeming Grace ; if it is the point of contact where the Life of Christ actually touches and possesses the soul, what wonder is it that it was so highly regarded ?

The wonder must lie with those who think Baptism of little or no value, and yet find their Bibles full of the records of it, and of the supreme privilege and value which were attached to it.

We do well, then, to reconsider our own Baptism, and, remembering that then and there we were sealed to God and made partakers of the Life of Jesus, might seriously reflect whether our lives have been a fair response to so great a gift. And reflection might be a step to better things.

I ought again to add one or two notes.

[1] *e.g.* Acts xxii. 16 ; ii. 38, and *passim*.

(1) Baptism, of course, is not magic. It will not save us (those of us at least who grow up) without our co-operation and effort. In its nature it resembles a seed which, though rightly planted, will not grow without light and moisture.

Baptism demands a response: it is not given to save us trouble, but it is given that our trouble taken may end in success: without it we should fail to be saints.

(2) "What of those who are not baptized? The Society of Friends, and out beyond them the heathen who do not know the Father revealed by Christ?"

Here let us refuse to be drawn. We are not their judges: and again, God is not the least likely to be less merciful than we are. They are, at present, outside the Visible Church: and God has not revealed what He does in those regions, though He has, through Christ, given very definite and happy promises to those who are inside. Thinking, however, as we do, we must assert, and do assert, that their ignorance of the true nature of Baptism has excluded them so far from Habitual Grace and restricted them to Actual Grace.

They are the poorer thereby. They may reach, they do reach, not only the level of S. John the Baptist, but a higher plane still; for the Spirit has come, and is in them, but they do not stand beside S. John the Divine—it takes Sacramental Grace to lift men there.

And if we are told that we are narrow, we only share the penalty of having principles, nor should we escape some measure of blame while we held

any principles strongly. The charge of narrowness is always brought against those who have definite principles. And our principles here are that the Incarnation was God's own particular plan for the salvation of souls, and that the Sacraments are the means of Grace. We do not condemn others except so far as any condemnation is implicit in our assertion that the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation and the Sacraments is true. But if these are our principles, let us stand by them; to have no principle is not to be broad-minded—it simply means that we are vague.

Holy Baptism has been dealt with at length because it is the first of the Sacraments, and therefore formed the best field for the illustratiou of the Sacramental principle. It is also probably less understood and less appreciated than the other great and holy Sacrament by which the Life of Christ is imparted—the Holy Communion.

Here Christ meets the full-grown soul face to face and imparts Himself not now by way of Regeneration, but as the Food and Nourishment of the Soul.

I hope I shall not be thought to deny that there are many methods, outside Communion, in which Christ deals with a Soul, giving it His own gifts and speaking to it words of comfort and affection, of warning or challenge. But we are dealing here with a special thing, the deepest thing of all, viz. how Christ can and does give to souls no external gift, but that true gift of Himself which His Incarnation has made it possible for Him to bestow. For the

Church is quite decisive that it is Himself He gives. We do not want anything between us and Jesus in this Sacrament. We do not define the mode, the "how"; but we know that it is Himself we receive. So if any Christian desires to receive the Incarnate Risen Christ into his soul and body, in the deepest, fullest, and most intimate way, let him come to Communion. He must come converted and free from grave sin; he must bring forth the fruits of a good Communion: but the moment of contact, when Christ comes to dwell in him, will be the moment of Communion.

I should wish to add four more notes on Baptism and the Sacraments in general.

(1) What is the connection of Baptism with the "Forgiveness of Sin"? What do we mean when we say, "I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins"? (Nicene Creed.) This seems a very deep and difficult point, because it raises the whole question of the connection of the Atonement with the actual forgiveness of any given person.

Yet for Christian theology it should not be insuperable.

When a person is baptized he is engrafted into Christ: he partakes of and shares Christ's glorified Life; *i.e.* the "particular" humanity of the person baptized is knit up to and joined into Christ's Universal glorified Humanity.

If this is true (as Christian theology teaches), then the baptized person will partake of the qualities of Christ's glorified Humanity (the engrafted branch will partake of the Life of the Vine with all its qualities).

Now the main qualities of the glorified Humanity of Christ are the Righteousness[1] which through the victory in the Atonement became the cause and means of forgiven-ness for men, and the glory and energy which Christ attained at the Resurrection and now enjoys at the Right Hand of God in Heaven.

Of these two qualities the engrafted branch, *i.e.* the baptized person, will partake at his Baptism.

Therefore we can say that remission of sins is given to the baptized (who must be in a proper state of repentance and faith, to profit thereby) at the moment of, and by the fact of, incorporation into Christ.

Forgiveness, then, is no arbitrary decree, but flows naturally from being baptized into the Redeemed and Glorified Humanity of Christ.

All this sounds complicated, but I doubt whether it is a bit more difficult than its physical analogue. We say that the Christian owes certain qualities, viz., Forgiven-ness and New Life to the Stock into which he has been engrafted. Is this more difficult than if we said, "The Black Prince owed certain qualities, viz. courage and strength, to the stock to which by physical generation and birth he belonged." We all agree that we are "in Adam" by physical incorporation ; is it impossible to get "into Christ" by spiritual incorporation and share His qualities ?

(2) "But isn't the Church very materialistic in

[1] It is very difficult to find the right word to express the quality of that unfallen Humanity which Jesus took of the Blessed Virgin Mary His Mother. We only know humanity as fallen : our Lord's Humanity was unfallen. Terms like "Innocence," "Integrity," "Sanctity," suggest themselves, but "Righteousness" is perhaps as good as any.

its teaching about the Sacraments? Can't we have a purely spiritual religion?" No: not if you want the Christian religion. For Christianity is the religion of the Word made Flesh—Spirit expressing itself in Matter. When Our Lord became Incarnate it was a real material Body He assumed, with real flesh and bones: it was in that material Body that He lived and died. And even when He rose from the dead, and the material became wholly the expression of the spiritual, even then He could be touched and handled.

Can we, then, afford to despise the material?

So again as regards ourselves, the recipients of Grace. Are we pure spirits? Are not our bodies part of us? Are they not the organs of our inward spirit? Are not our bodies sacramental in the sense that they are the outward and visible part of our inward and spiritual part? That is why the Christian Sacraments suit us so well. They precisely fit us: they dovetail into us exactly, for they too, like ourselves, have an outward part which is the expression of something inward and spiritual.

So in the Christian teaching about the Incarnation, the Sacraments, the nature of man, the Church has always insisted that we must not despise the material: it is the organ through which the spiritual expresses itself. A "purely spiritual" religion therefore would certainly not be Christianity.

(3) I do not deal here, but later, with those other sacred ordinances which are commonly known as Sacraments: *e.g.* Confirmation and Penance. And that, not because I do not believe that they bestow

Christ's blessings on His Children, but because they do not come in at this point in my scheme where I am dealing with those Sacraments alone which positively convey to men the Incarnate ascended Life of Christ.

These other ordinances bestow indeed His Spirit or His authority : by them life's turning-points are sanctified, through them the sins which have withered the soul and wounded Grace are cleansed, and baptismal privileges restored : yet they clearly differ for my present purpose from the Sacraments of the Gospel.

(4) Sacraments are so far from being narrow and exclusive ordinances that they are, on the contrary, the plain man's charter of welcome and acceptance in the Christian religion, as well as being the safeguard and complement of a true mysticism.

For if only mystics were true Christians, the plain, ordinary man without any mystic genius would have no chance. Probably many more people than is suspected have a mystic vein in them, and are capable of that intuitive perception of God and intimate felt love and union with Him which is mysticism. Many religious people of the humdrum order are at any rate capable of great advance in the art of contemplation and of the prayer of quiet. Yet many are not. And the Christian religion has room for those who produce twenty-fold as well as for those who yield a hundred-fold. Therefore the Sacraments are freely offered to anybody—mystical or unmystical—who wills to repent of sin and means to do their best.

The unmystical person who "feels" little, and is only conscious of dryness and sterility, is welcomed at the altar by the Lord of mystics and non-mystics alike, on the basis of goodwill. Anybody who means to try is a welcome guest.[1]

Mysticism is the privilege of the few: Sacraments are the charter of acceptance for all; the Grace of Christ is large enough for all.

. . . . . .

Let me now summarise the great acts of God by which Grace reaches man. And for the sake of clearness I will put it in a tabulated form.

I. God—The Blessed Trinity.
The Source of all Life and Grace.

II. Links in the chain by which Grace reaches man.
- The Incarnation of Jesus
- The Atonement
- The Resurrection
- The Ascension
- The Mission of the Spirit
- The Church
- The Sacraments

III. Man—Convertedly receiving Grace and living by it.

These, then, are the links between God and the redeemed soul. All necessary: all consecutive. To leave out any would be to break the connection. An

[1] *Cf.* H. H. Kelly, *The Church and Religious Unity.* (Longmans.)

intelligent Christianity grasps and appreciates them all.

NOTE.—I am conscious that the section (p. 98) dealing with the connection between baptism and forgiveness is difficult. The illustration of the "woman with the issue of blood" (Luke viii. 44) might make it easier. My meaning is that at our baptism our fallen humanity touches His glorified unfallen Humanity. Virtue goes out of Him and we are healed.

PART IV

THE RESPONSE OF MAN TO GRACE

CHAPTER XI

CONVERSION

So far we have dealt with God's free gift of Grace: our privilege, though not our right. Yet gifts and privileges are never given to be either buried and unused, or used solely for the enjoyment of the privileged person. So treated, they become mere instruments of insolence and selfishness: rights and duties, privilege and service, go hand in hand. Thus God's Gift of grace requires a response; otherwise it will be useless to us and ultimately withdrawn. And the response God asks is no mere tithe, no external oblation, no bullocks and calves for sacrifice. He asked for these in the days of half-light that he might train mankind to offer something better. What He asks for now is the offering of our life to be lived for God and in God; and through the grace of Jesus we can give Him what He asks. This does not mean that we all have to become clergy or nuns (this is a special vocation), nor does it mean that we become in any way professionally pious; but it does mean that we live out our different lives as servants and friends of God, living as in His presence, and acting on His principles of justice, truth, generosity, and love.

Note carefully that God's claims upon us are not arbitrary or exacting. They are made entirely for our highest welfare and happiness. We talk sometimes as if God were hard upon us: He is only hard in the sense that the general is hard on his men when he leads them to the risks of danger and death on the battlefield. God asks nothing of us beyond what He is obliged to ask for our sake and for His work: if He asks much, it is because we are called to high service somewhere.

So we are called to make a definite response to the call of God, and here it is that we reach the high and important term *conversion*. For conversion is the name for the conscious response of a life to the Call and Grace of God, and in every case this response must be made by us. We must be converted if we would enter the Kingdom.

And how does Conversion come about? In this way.

The Holy Spirit of God works at the heart of the man or woman in one of several ways. Perhaps by some outward circumstance of friendship or influence, by some chance word or book, or perhaps by some stirring event, such as war, or love, or death; or unbidden musings may arise in the soul, and questions which demand an answer.

So far this is wholly the work of the Spirit. Then the person begins to ponder over the truth of religion and the call of God, and consider whether he will say Yes or No to God. For God does not force His claims upon anybody: He deals

with us as sons, not serfs ; our response must be voluntary and self-given.

Whenever the soul, having considered God's claims, accepts them as true and binding on itself, and regards itself as committed to them, we call this process or this act "Conversion"—the turning of the soul to God in willing surrender and obedience. And this conversion is the first and necessary act of response to the gifts and call of God.

About the necessity of the fact of conversion there is no dispute among Christians. But there are some difficulties about the manner of conversion. Is it a process or an act : is it gradual or sudden ? The answer is decisively. Both sorts of conversion are valid.

For some truly converted people have never been conscious of any crisis in their spiritual history. They have never lost their baptismal grace or innocence, but have developed normally and steadily until they became saints of God. Their conversion has been wholly a process. Others have turned sharply, and in a moment, from careless or gross lives, and have practically instantaneously learnt to adore what they burnt, and to burn what they adored.

These sudden conversions are very frequent and very real. The experiences of S. Paul, S. Augustine, S. Francis are paralleled not only by eminent persons like Cardinal Newman but by a multitude of very ordinary and normal people.

The soul becomes pressingly aware of the claims of God : exclusively, agonisingly so. All external

things are as nought compared to the vivid insistent claim of Someone upon our soul's allegiance. So long as the soul hesitates or declines, it is tossed in a sea of unrest and misery, it is in captivity and darkness. But all this ends with the act of surrender. "I give in : I acquiesce : I will do this or that no more : I will do what I thought I never could : I will arise and go to my Father."

And the light which breaks in upon the soul is really palpable : one could only describe the new state of the soul in terms of light. Light is the exact word, the only word : where there was darkness, there is now light.

And the surrendered soul enjoys an understanding with God, and has obtained a relationship with Him which brings peace unspeakable. The sins which held the soul captive do not even attract, the duties previously hated seem easy and pleasant : the soul feels as if it were floating on a limitless sea of peace.

This is all real and true : but all the same we should be wrong to think it necessary for all ; it even has its own dangers and snares.

It is probably necessary for sinners, who are pretty far gone and need very energetic dealing to save them from final collapse, that the process of conversion should begin with an abrupt act of conversion. Perhaps also for certain people who are called to a special work of trial and difficulty, in which they would fail if they were not supported by the memories of this great and encouraging event, such a vivid beginning is necessary. S. Paul

would be a good instance of the latter supposition: we see how in the times of greatest stress he always fell back, not on argument, but on the fact of his conversion.

Still all this has its special dangers: and in any case is never a matter for spiritual pride. If it leads to absence of continued efforts: if it turns a man into a prig: if it leads to over-emotionalism: it is full of peril.

We had better say quite clearly that the work of conversion is real and true in anyone who accepts the Will of God as the principle of his life, and wills to make such efforts as are needed—and they will be many—to square his life with his principle.

Whether the process of conversion began with a violent crisis or not we will not ask, for it really does not matter. He has got right, and is converted: he has made the response to Grace: we need not bother how.

. . . . . .

Several questions are often asked about conversion: for instance, "How do you get it?" If you are persuaded that the Christian religion is true, you can have it by a simple exercise of the will responding to and using the grace of God. Of course, if you have been taught that a violent emotional crisis is necessary for everybody, you will either feel an outsider to religion or will make violent efforts to induce the feelings of conversion. In both cases you will be utterly mistaken and wrong.

If God wants you to have this crisis you will

have it, but you can be perfectly converted without it, and indeed in your own case it might do you harm. You have only to turn quietly to Our Lord and say, "I will to do Thy Will: take me as Thy friend and child," and thereafter make an honest effort to give up the sins which mar this relationship and to do the duties which obviously arise from it, and the process of conversion has begun: you will of course use the Sacraments, and will continue steadily in prayer: but as far as conversion is concerned you will be right. All that has happened is that in your case the process of conversion has begun quietly, without a felt crisis.

Another question is asked: "Does conversion last?" If by conversion is meant just the spiritual upheaval with which some converted lives start, the answer is—No, not unless it is kept going by prayer and effort and the use of Grace.

On the theory put forward here, this act of conversion is only a starting-point, given overwhelmingly to certain persons for a certain purpose; it is neither the whole process, nor is it meant for everybody.

True conversion, that which applies to everybody, is a gradual process, ever deepening and widening until the whole man—will, intellect, feelings and all—is utterly expressive of the Mind and Will of Christ.

The only sort of conversion that lasts is the loyal surrender of the will to Christ, strengthened and completed by thought and prayer, effort and Grace.

The last question I will try to answer is, "How

do we know it is all real, and not self-hypnotism?" And the answer is, I suppose, "By the fruits of it."

It is quite true that at the start we take it all on faith, admitting that much of it is a mystery.

Yet we do not admit that this faith is unreasonable. Scientists always try to explain phenomena, and when a satisfactory explanation is found they worry no more. If they puzzle why a fish has gills, they know there must be some explanation, and when they find that a fish breathes through its gills they are satisfied.

We find certain phenomena about ourselves: a longing after God, an intense intuitive recognition of someone: a moral Lord to whom our conscience does homage. These are real phenomena: you can no more pooh-pooh them than the trunk of an elephant or the tongue of a chameleon; there must be some reason why they came to be thus.

I do not say that these phenomena justify the existence of the Christian God or the Christian religion, but they are quite enough justification to send us roaming over land and sea to seek whether they point to realities. Our star in the East is quite a good reason for leaving the dull routine of mere terrestrial existence and seeking for what lies behind it and explains it.

And for one reason and another we have tried whether the hypothesis of Christianity fits and fulfils the longings of natural religion. It does. Not in the sense, no doubt, that we can make everybody else see it, nor in the sense that we can prove to ourselves and others that $2 \times 2 = 4$.

It has had certain results, however. Sins avoided: joy and peace in the soul: a sense of cheerfulness and power: ability not to be crushed by difficulties: light instead of darkness: hope in place of despair.

Add to this, God nearer, prayers happy and (in the long run) answered, others helped and made happy, and you will see why we think that conversion and all its implications is real.

It is possible for us to imagine we are all wrong: but somehow we don't think so: at least we are willing to live for the truth of it all, and some people, I am told, have died for it.

CHAPTER XII

THE LIFE OF PRAYER

BUT the converted life is supernatural, and can be kept alive only by supernatural means. The real Christian life—I do not mean that compromise with the world by which we so often misrepresent Christianity—must seem to the "natural man" a very odd and foolish thing. Why should people deny themselves this pleasure or do this unpleasant thing? Why fast, why repent, why mortify any desires? Why give time to prayer or reflection or meditation?

And these questionings are not confined to the world outside real Christianity. They are often echoed in the hearts of those who have once seen the light but are becoming a little weary.

For the practices and self-denials of a real religion are not easy to those who try to live a religious life. Religious people are not just cranks who have a curious and perverted taste for fasting or early rising, for celibacy or living in slums. Such things are as naturally distasteful to them as to others. But they have seen the vision of an ideal, they have been caught up by their conversion into the region and realm of ideals, and they want to

keep there. This they can only do by transcending the natural, or at least that part of the natural which gets into the way of the supernatural, and this they can do, and continue to do, only by supernatural aid: by keeping in touch with the world of supernatural things.

Hence prayer and Sacraments: the supernatural means of keeping in touch with the spiritual and invisible world of reality; Sacraments through which the Incarnate Life of Jesus is transfused into us; prayer which puts us into touch with God, besides being the condition of receiving the Sacraments to any profit.

Let us deal very carefully with the subject of prayer, because it lies at the very basis of a deep and effective religion. And it is not an easy subject either to explain or to grasp. All sorts of unexpected subtleties and refinements are to be found in real prayer; the most we can do here is to try and study its broader outlines.

Prayer is lifting up the heart and the mind to God. It is getting into and keeping in touch with God. It is what we might call "the voice of right relationship to God." Yet the voice is not necessarily articulate: words are not essential to prayer. We might make a distinction between prayer and prayers. Prayers always take some concrete form or expression, prayer can be inarticulate and yet real. One could illustrate by a story from the life of a well-known philanthropist. Being struck by the raggedness and forlorn appearance of a boy, he remarked, "I would gladly help you if

you could find somebody to speak for you." The boy replied, "If these rags don't speak for me, I don't think it's much good applying to anyone else." Here the appeal lay not in words or gestures, but in the voiceless pleading of the boy's pitiful state.

In the same way we might say that prayer is an attitude consciously (and sometimes unconsciously) taken up towards God by a soul which leans, or wants to lean, upon Him. For if God is indeed a loving Creator and Friend, and the soul becomes aware of the fact, it tends to have a permanent set and posture of love and trust and appeal towards God. The soul (as in the case of Brother Laurence) is always in the right relationship to God, and such attitude has its own appeal —is really prayer—although perhaps the mind in such a case is busy elsewhere and the body occupied.

"He breathed no prayer, he proffered no request"

could theoretically be perfectly consistent with a life of constant prayer: for one could imagine a life of complete and perfect prayer without the utterance of a single vocal request.

Prayer, accordingly, in its widest and deepest sense, will be the permanent posture of the soul towards God in willing alliance and dependence: and the life of prayer will sum up the habits and character of a soul so directed. Many of the outward actions of such a soul will differ little, if at all, from the actions of unprayerful people:

the difference will be in the motive and the spiritual attitude of the soul which performs them.

We may accordingly think with relief and pleasure that many a man who professes not to know God, and who says no prayers, may yet be living in a real degree the life of prayer.

So far as he sets himself to champion ideals such as justice, truth, or magnanimity, or to live the life of purity and unselfishness, such a one is in reality set and inclined towards God, and is living a life of prayer, although God may be to him in shadow, and his prayer unconscious.

Normally, however, prayer will express itself in prayers, just as a mother's attitude and relationship to her child expresses itself in kisses and endearments ; and so we discover whole fields of devotion which come into being as the prayerful attitude of the soul expresses itself in the various mental and vocal acts of prayer.[1]

Speaking roughly, we can divide prayers into two kinds : vocal prayer and mental prayer.

By vocal prayers we mean the prayers which we put into words and could speak aloud if necessary.

The most familiar form of these are our morning and evening prayers—so vitally necessary for our normal spiritual life—and the most familiar instance of such prayers is the Lord's Prayer.

Many people find a difficulty in knowing what to say to God in these daily prayers. Yet a little analysis would supply abundant matter for prayer.

[1] *Cf.* Procter, *In Ways of Prayer.* (Longmans.)

Perfect daily prayers would include these four elements, and in this order:

Praise.
Thanksgiving.
Petition { for our necessities. / for pardon.

We start with *praise* because we do not want to be selfish in prayer any more than in other ways: therefore we begin by thinking about God. And if we remember Who He is, and what we are, we naturally begin with adoration. For He is the Creator, Holy, Strong and Loving, and we are His creatures, utterly dependent on Him to realise the longings after holiness which He has implanted in us. So we direct to Him the voice of right relationship: there is nothing forced or unnatural in that. "Glory be to Thee, Father and Friend," is the natural expression of a child of God to his Father.

We can either at this point use our own words or else fall back upon the Church's familiar phrases—the simple "Gloria Patri" or the "Gloria in Excelsis," "Glory be to God on high." We have but to place ourselves in spirit alongside the Angels and Saints in Heaven, and praise will issue naturally. . . .

After praise, *thanksgiving*. And it ought not to be difficult to find subjects for thanks: life, health, strength, food, friends, work, and above all Redemption through Jesus, suggest themselves at once, as well as thanksgivings for the "means of grace and the hope of glory." If we wanted a set prayer for

use, there is the General Thanksgiving from the Prayer-book, a noble and beautiful prayer.

Then, and not till then, may we think of ourselves. So we make a petition at this point for anything we need or want, if so be that God's glory and the good of the world and ourselves are promoted thereby. "Give us this day our daily bread."

And finally we ask for *pardon* for those daily failures, carelessnesses, and rebellions by which we are, according to their degree, separated from God and stained in our own souls.

And all through these private prayers we must be very careful to remember that never do we speak merely as individuals. "*Our* Father; *our* daily bread; *our* trespasses."

We speak as members of a world-wide humanity and of a Christian community meant to be world-wide: others' salvation must become as dear to us as our own: their needs as pressing as ours. Salvation is organic.

With these daily prayers we may include two special forms of vocal prayer, intercessory prayer and ejaculatory prayer.

Intercessory prayer means that we hold up in our hands before God some cause or some person, praying that the Will of God may be done in them or for them.

Some find a difficulty about this, but it seems reasonable that God, in creating us as rational beings and capable of co-operation with Himself, should often wait, before bestowing blessings, until

we exercise that possibility of co-operation with which He has endowed us.

It might stimulate our intercessions if we remembered that God was waiting for us that He might bestow His blessing on some cause. No doubt He could have done it without us, but He sometimes seems to prefer to await the partnership of our wills and prayers.

Ejaculatory prayers are the prayers we shoot up to Heaven as arrows from a bow.

The best instance is in Nehemiah, when the King asked him what he wanted and he "prayed to the King of Heaven" between the question and his answer.

Ejaculatory prayer had perhaps better not be forced: it should spring spontaneously from a dependent and grateful heart on occasions of danger or temptation, gladness and joy.

At this point many people think they have reached the limit of the possibilities of prayer. But a whole field of devotion remains unexplored. This is the most fruitful field of mental prayer.

Mental Prayer may be subdivided into two main headings, Meditation and Contemplation.

Meditation really means that we think over some subject or passage of Scripture with God. We think over it in God's presence, and we consult Him about it.

The simplest form is to read a passage of Scripture carefully: think what it meant at the time it was written, and what lesson it has for oneself at the moment: and then pray over it. In other words, we exercise successively the memory, the reason,

the will and affections, upon a given subject or passage. Obviously we need not confine ourselves to a passage of Scripture: any subject would do. We could meditate very profitably on Christmas Day: Social Reform: national needs: Missions: and a thousand subjects, giving ourselves all the freedom we need. Books of meditation abound, but it is permissible to feel a certain aversion to the use of these except as a guide of subject: spiritual plagiarism can be overdone, and we need not be afraid to make our meditations our own. And of books, the Bible is supremely and unapproachably the best. Perhaps I might subjoin a simple meditation—subject, Christmas Day.

The memory: All the details of Christmas morning: the time: the foster father: the shepherds: the mother: the Child, &c.

The reason: What does it all mean? That God has visited His people: the Redeemer has come, &c.

The will and affections: "My God, I thank Thee:" "I resolve that henceforth I will be more Christian," &c.

This is childishly simple: but it provides an amply sufficient framework. Many books about meditation leave one simply bewildered by the masses of detail, and cause meditation to be thought of as a kind of Chinese puzzle. In reality it is quite simple, at least in structure.

And the second kind of mental prayer is *Contemplation.* This is often easier than Meditation and more profitable, but is almost impossible to describe.

If one could imagine two old friends meeting after many years, and sitting over a fire together, saying nothing, because their hearts were too full, yet enjoying each other's company intensely, this would be a faint picture of Contemplation.

For in Contemplation God and the soul look at each other and are content. It is a wordless and almost thoughtless association of the spirit of man and the Spirit of God.

It comes about, when it does come about, by putting oneself into the Presence of God and keeping quiet. One feels a Presence within the soul and is happy, and sparks of love and trust fly outwards from the soul to God. At all events this is what the Saints seem to say, though a dumbness comes over them all when they try to explain. Contemplation is, as all know, the art of the mystics whereby they grow into the Life of God. It is well to try it at times, but if one cannot succeed, one can always fall back upon the more sober meditation, but it is worth trying, for it is the school of saints. But it is easy neither to understand nor to do. Yet again I suggest that it is worth trying.[1]

Such then in broad outline is prayer, without which spiritual life falters and finally dies.

NOTE

I should like to emphasize the importance of Bible reading. If the Bible is inspired by the Spirit it will have its message for

[1] *Cf.* Miss Underhill's book, *Mysticism.* (Methuen.)

ourselves. We ought to read the Bible regularly, diligently, and with prayer.

And regularity is of the utmost importance. Without it we become undisciplined and spiritually restless and shallow.

I should also wish to add that if we find any kind of systematic meditation too difficult, or unhelpful, we do just as well if we talk to our Lord in the most familiar and loving way possible about Himself and His goodness, and our needs and other people's.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LIFE OF PRAYER: SOME EFFECTS OF PRAYER

BEFORE passing on to further details in the life of response to Grace, it is worth while noticing some effects of prayer which are well known to those who pray, but are naturally unknown to those who do not.

For if we pray we progress : otherwise the spiritual life stands still and then degenerates. Prayer exercises the muscles of the soul ; if they remain inert they ultimately wither and die. Most of the spiritual grumblings and discontent among religious people arise from prayers shirked or scamped, and the unpleasant consciousness that our religion is thin and powerless generally arises from the same cause.

Prayers said regularly, at the proper time, and without hurry, produce certain definite effects, of which the principal are—

(*a*) Religious certainty. It is quite impossible in the twentieth century, except perhaps for a few temperamentally religious persons, to pass through life untroubled by any religious difficulties. In the "ages of faith" most people believed what they were told, and sad stuff some of it was. In the present scientific

age, everything is questioned, and the old cocksureness about religion has been replaced—I will not say by less certainty—but by more modesty, and by a keener appreciation of historical and critical difficulties.

"How do we know that we are not perhaps mistaken?" Well, we must study and think and inquire, and those of us who continue Christians are persuaded by adequate reasonings (as we think) that the Christian hypothesis is true: but the serene certainty of the Saints is not based simply on historical proofs, but on the inward conviction that prayer produces.

In prayer they seek communion with God, and they find it. And lesser people in their degree approach to the same certitude.

One cannot make it a matter of argument; one can only testify, and call other witnesses to give similar evidence, that prayer persisted in gives the conviction of getting into living touch with a real Someone and finding thereby peace and assurance and light.

Reasoning can only give probability, prayer produces conviction.

(*b*) Prayer further leads to a happy intimacy with God. For God is not only an Object of awe, He is a Friend with Whom a happy intimacy is possible.

Ananias, the Saint whom the Lord used to heal S. Paul's blindness (Acts ix.), remonstrates and reasons with God in the most familiar fashion: S. Paul himself discusses with God the matter of his

"infirmity of the flesh." And in, *e.g.*, the *Imitation* of Thomas à Kempis, we find full-blown dialogues between God and the soul. "Self-suggestion," says the critic. Of course it is in a sense, yet the soul is conscious that the other party in the dialogue, though itself, is not only itself: there is an external power and force at work within us, wherefore the voices of encouragement or warning are accepted as the voices of a friend and a judge.

We value them for their fruits, and their fruits are good.

(*c*) And the crowning fruit of prayer is the love of God.

For intimacy with God and the growing appreciation of His character and of His love towards us breeds in us a real love towards Him.

We may feel gratitude to the Saviour for His goodness and loving-kindness to us, but that falls short of the matured love and affection which prayer begets. More and more we come to feel we cannot do without Him, and that all our hopes and ideals are included in, and mixed up with, His love for us and our responding love to Him. Increasingly we feel that by our intimate communion with Him we are hitched on to all that makes for true progress and true delight: what wonder if in moments of insight, some can truly say that they love Him? Of course the adversaries will again say that it cannot be done; meaning of course that they have never done it themselves; to this we should reply that probably they do not pray themselves, and also that the God they disbelieve in is eminently un-

lovable, so that we are not surprised that they think the love of Him impossible.

Our God is lovable: for He is to us no sharply-outlined, concrete individual, a sort of magnified and sombre Man: He may be still largely unknown to us, though the main outlines of His character were expressed in Jesus Christ, Who is surely attractive; yet we are certain that He contains in Himself and expresses in fullness all the goodness and the beauty and the truth and the love of which we have caught enough glimmerings to make the Principle of them supremely desirable and lovable.

If you are convinced that all the beauty of the world—every rose that blows, every pearly grey dawn, every sunset flush—has its root and origin in God: if you believe that all purity and innocence, all courage and heroism, all love and tenderness, are reflections of His character, it is not an insuperable difficulty to love Him.

And when we further believe that He has offered us in Jesus a share of His Life, so that we can, as it were, get inside His Life and share His character and enjoy His joys for ever, we think we may well be acquitted of unreasonableness if we believe we can grow to love Him Who has done all this for us.

Of course if you look upon God as a policeman, with punishments always handy, you will not agree with us, and naturally: our suggestion is that you revise your ideas of God.

Still it might be said, "Your love for God is selfish. All that you would-be religious people want is a heaven where you'll be happy with your God."

I agree that is a real danger, yet it is a charge which might be made against all human love too.

The real reason why souls love God is because they were made for that purpose. Souls are made to love God just as limpets are meant to cling to rocks.

The real danger of selfishness is lest we should forget that there are other detached limpets who also would be happy if they could find the rock.

We must not want to keep the rock to ourselves. It is quite right that we should cling there, because we were made to cling. But we must make room for the other limpets.

The love of God will never be a selfish thing if we passionately desire that every soul in the world should share it. And Christianity makes that passionate desire one of its two bases.

We are to love God—yes : but also our neighbour as ourself.

If we loved God without loving our neighbour, such love would be mere sentimentality.

Those who pray "*Our* Father" will not forget that love of God includes the desire that all men shall share our joy.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW CONVERSION ISSUES IN WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE

TRUE love of God leads to worship, and therefore to sacrifice. True human love does the same. For real love is accompanied not only by a great desire to honour and exalt the object beloved (herein lies the difference between love and lust: love exalts, lust degrades its object), but also by an intense feeling of unworthiness. "Oh that I were more worthy": "Oh that I could offer something worth offering": "Oh that I could give myself, and the universe besides, and more still, in token of my homage and surrender."

And what is true of the best human love, is infinitely more true of the Love of God. Those who have been admitted to the company of the lovers of God become smitten with the passionate desire to give to God something worthy of Himself. Hence worship, offering, sacrifice, which are commonplaces in the history of religion.

It is perhaps well to say at once that worship by sacrifice, though essentially right and Christian, has been a matter of gradual evolution and growth, and

possesses a history which records many imperfect stages and many dark perversions of this true principle.

There have been the sinister rites and sacrifices of fear. Fear, rightly understood, is doubtless a right element in man's feeling toward God, but it is a miserable basis for religion.

The hideous heathen sacrifices to Moloch and Baal are spoken of in the Old Testament with a fury of hatred and detestation, as being devilish and utterly abhorrent to Jehovah. He accepts, indeed, bullocks and goats, but only at a temporary stage in the education of those whose true sacrifice must be a broken and contrite heart, and who must learn to "offer the sacrifice of righteousness."

Thus the sacrificial system of the Jews was, and was meant to be, imperfect, temporary, and educative. The prophets and the psalmists were perfectly aware of that. "Thinkest thou that I will eat bulls' flesh or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving and pay thy vows unto the Most High."

The sacrificial system of the Jews was really a signpost, pointing to the mystical sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Who should take away the sins of the world, yet the sacrifices had value even at the time, for they taught the Jews their utter dependence upon God and their own intrinsic unworthiness.

There also have been, and exist to-day, distorted sacrifices. "They gashed themselves with knives and lancets," perversions of the true idea of sacrifice, founded on the false idea that God is jealous or unreasonable: but these no more in-

validate the true idea of sacrifice than rashness invalidates true courage.

True love will always produce the right kind of worship, and true worship will express itself in the right kind of sacrifice. If we consider our Lord's Passion, and how it was caused by His Love of God and Man, and was the perfect sacrifice of perfect love, we shall see the truth of this.

So if we love God we shall desire to worship Him. And this desire to worship will run through our whole life. It will be the motive of our prayers, our churchgoing, our life work, our moral and intellectual conduct.

We have largely lost this idea in England, though there are signs that it is being recovered.

People forgot that the highest work must have the highest motive.

When men forgot to build for the glory of God, they ceased to be able to build those cathedrals which are the monuments of true Christian worship.

People have ceased to go to church, largely because the idea of worship has been lost.

Do not we know the sort of churches where choirs give a performance, but where real worship of God is distressingly far to seek ?

And if you asked the average church-goer why he went to church, would not the answer too often be "to get help," or "to do the right thing," with little or no idea that churchgoing is, above all else, a gathering together of the Christian brethren to give to God a willing act of united worship, homage, and love ?

Or again : is it not also true that most of us in considering what we should do with our lives in the way of a profession have never even thought of asking God for guidance and a right vocation, so that our life-work might by its honesty and industry promote His glory and the coming of His Kingdom ?

Yet if we were really created in order to find God and love Him and live in Him for ever, it would have been natural enough to seek His leading in so very important a matter.

But true lovers of God are different : for they desire in all things to give their worship to God, and that worship will always issue in sacrifice. Willingness to make sacrifices always is and always has been the test and measure of honest worship and unselfish love.

. . . . . .

Now of Sacrifice there are three main lines.

(1) Self-sacrifice. This is the common and ordinary and yet most noble expression of an individual's subordination of himself to another's welfare : whether that welfare be of God or man.

People who are technically non-religious often exhibit it in a supreme degree : proving thereby that they have the root of true religion in them though it may have been unsuspected even by themselves. Ordinary self-sacrifice means that in view of some worthy end, the individual sacrifices his own pleasure or interest, and, at the moment at least, is not thinking about himself at all. There are no doubt instances of so-called self-sacrifice where a man is really only preferring some ultimate good to

some present satisfaction. A man might, *e.g.*, stop and pick up a wounded comrade under fire rather than think himself, or be thought, a poltroon for the rest of his days. This is not true self-sacrifice, for it is really only an enlightened self-interest—not a bad thing at all, but a good thing: only not self-sacrifice. True self-sacrifice is made where the self never enters into consideration at all, the only thought being of some worthy object to be attained at any cost, or some person to be honoured at any price.

Ideally—though happily for us the choice is absurd—we ought to choose to be in hell with God, rather than in heaven with Satan.

The religious man therefore who desires to worship God, will try to make the glory of God his main and ultimately his sole end. Incidentally he will attain perfect happiness by so doing, but this is a result; it is not his object.

No doubt in this world our motives will be always mixed, and sometimes very painfully and humiliatingly so: yet it remains that the glory of God and the good of men are the true motives of self-sacrifice and the real objects of a loving worship.

(2) Beyond and besides normal and obvious self-sacrifice we must consider mystical self-sacrifice.

Hard though it be to perform, yet everybody can understand normal self-sacrifice.

One sees why a soldier dies at his post, or why Father Damien gave his life for the lepers. There is some obvious object to be attained. But there is a mysterious form of self-sacrifice—not to be suffered

or performed without a vocation—which has no obvious object and is hard to be explained.

To deny oneself gratuitously or suffer pain without any real benefit to God or man seems, and is, foolish : if such self-denial springs from a subconscious feeling that God is rather pleased when we are unhappy it is a blasphemy as well. There is no sense or Christianity in denying oneself anything except with an honourable and adequate motive : otherwise you get back to Moloch and the sacrifice of innocent children to cruel and monstrous devils.

Yet it does not follow that self-sacrifice which lacks an obvious motive has no motive : there may be a deeper motive than the man in the street can fathom.

"Wherefore I rejoice in reproaches," says S. Paul. Why ? S. Francis of Assisi rejoiced exceedingly over the pains of those strange marks in hands and feet which, on all the evidence, he came to possess. Why ?

The explanation must be sought in the idea of a mystical sharing of the pain of Christ. It is a fallen world and it is a sinful world, and to redeem it the Saviour suffered much pain and grief in countervailing and counterbalancing the evil pleasures and sin of the world. Those who are in closest touch with Him and share His Life are heirs indeed of His eternal glory, but He often admits them to a share of His pain too, and if they bear it aright they will in a mystical sense be not only sharers in the suffering life of the Lord,

but in a degree co-redeemers of the world. ("I fill up what is lacking of the afflictions of Christ" Colossians i. 24.)

This is a great mystery, but it may possibly explain two things: the apparently utterly undeserved sufferings of most holy and excellent and innocent people, and also the almost eager willingness of saints to bear that pain. They feel it unites them to Him more deeply than all the pleasures and the satisfactions in the world. One cannot argue much about this, but if it is at all true it explains many things.

There are sufferers who would suffer as gladly as they now suffer wonderingly, if they believed this.

At all events the possibility of this line of argument being true should save us from hasty judgments on those who seem perverse to us because they are willing to suffer or to deny themselves without a motive which is obvious to us.

(3) But it is the sorrow of all saintly people that their self-denial and self-sacrifice is so little. They have tried to give all they can and yet they feel it is hopelessly inadequate. They feel that the love which inspires them would make the offering of the whole universe insufficient: they would like to offer God to God as the only adequate expression of their worship and their love.

Triumphantly therefore Christians believe that they can do this: that Christ has put at their disposal the means of offering an adequate worship to the Father, by lifting up Him, the Lamb of God, the perfect Offering.

And how is this done? Is it by meditating that Jesus died for us as our Representative nineteen centuries ago?

No doubt this helps: no doubt this is a real way of worship. But Jesus has left to His Church a more definite and concrete way of perpetuating His Sacrifice and pleading it as an act of perfect worship to the Father.

"Who in the same night that He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks He brake it and gave it to His disciples, saying, Take eat, this is My Body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

And again, "As oft as ye eat of this bread and drink of this Cup ye do shew the Lord's Death till He come."

And again, from our Prayer-book Catechism: "Why then was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained? For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the Death of Christ and of the benefits which we receive thereby."

Christendom has always asserted that the Holy Eucharist is both Sacrifice and Communion—a presentation of the Sacrifice and a feeding on the Sacrifice. Therefore, all those lovers of God who long to make an adequate offering to God can come to the Holy Eucharist in sure and certain belief that herein they will find their living Lord Who was dead and is alive again, Who comes among His people according to His Word; that in the commemorative Sacrifice of the altar His children may find a sacrifice adequate to the Majesty of God and

one with which they can associate themselves, and make it their own act of worship and love.

Hence the supreme place of the Eucharist in the worship of the Church.

For it is a Sacrifice worthy of God, for it is Christ's : it is also our Sacrifice because Christ is ours—our Representative and the Head of that redeemed Humanity which offers the Sacrifice. At last, in the Sacrifice of God Himself, made on the Cross and commemorated and perpetuated at the altar, we possess an offering and an act of worship worthy of God Himself. We have offered the Sacrifice of God to God, and worship has found at last its adequate expression.[1]

Personally we have much to learn and far to go : but the Sacrifice itself is complete. God is adequately worshipped : Humanity-in-Jesus has offered a sufficient Sacrifice : we can only hope and pray that we may join less unworthily in the Commemoration thereof.

[1] Of course there is no repetition of the Sacrifice of the Cross. The Eucharist is a commemorative Sacrifice not a new one.

CHAPTER XV

THE PLACE OF SACRAMENTS IN THE CONVERTED LIFE

We have seen that the response of a human soul to the drawing and call of the Holy Spirit expresses itself in a progressively converted life of surrender, prayer, and worship.

What will be the attitude of such a person to the Sacraments? Will he understand them? Will he use them at all? Will he use them frequently? Will he use them devoutly or off-handedly?

And here we touch a characteristic of human nature which is as widespread as it is regrettable—the inability to hold simultaneously two complementary truths. For the ordinary mind is one-sided, and while it grasps one aspect of truth firmly enough, is unable to see that there may be another side equally necessary to the complete truth.

For instance: the requirements for a good meal are (1) a good appetite (2) something good to eat. Yet if ever there was a newspaper controversy on the subject, one set of letters would furiously maintain that what you wanted for a good meal was a good appetite. What on earth, they would say, is the use of food without the capability of assimi-

lating it? The other set of letters would pour equal scorn on their opponents. Whatever good is there in an appetite unless you possess something to eat? Food is the necessity for a good meal.

So controversialists mostly argue. Liberals and Conservatives: Moderates and Progressives: Mystics and Sacramentalists: objectivists and subjectivists, mostly talk and write as if they alone were right, whereas obviously truth lies in some synthesis of two necessary elements and ideas.

And theological argument about Sacraments has equally suffered from the use of antithesis where there need be no antitheses at all.

Advocates of the necessity of conversion have underrated and depreciated Grace: believers in Grace have rather sniffed at Conversion. The truth of the matter ought not to be difficult: both Grace and Conversion are necessities of the Christian life; God gives us His objective and unearned Grace through the Sacraments: but the converted heart alone receives it profitably and brings forth the rightful fruit thereof. Is this so very difficult: that Sacraments and Conversion are *both* necessary? Yet it is despairing how many cannot understand.

However, we cannot wait too long over the one-sided minds who never will consider complementary truths and perhaps never can. They must continue their wearisome assertion of half-truths and incomplete truths till the end of the chapter.

Conversion *versus* Sacraments: Sacraments *versus* Conversion; so it will go on, I suppose, till the end. But if any are convinced that both the Bible and

the Church teach Sacraments *plus* Conversion, then we can with profit inquire how the converted person will regard and make use of the Sacraments.

I. *First, he will understand them.*

For Sacraments are terribly misunderstood. How many of us really grasp and believe that, *e.g.*, in Holy Communion rightly received, Christ imparts to us His risen and glorified Humanity and so gives Himself to be the Food of our souls? "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him."

If you say, "Everybody believes that," then I would ask you to hold together in your mind (*a*) the exceeding beauty and preciousness and value of Christ's sacramental indwelling, and (*b*) the number of communicants in the average parish, the average school, the average college chapel.

The truth is that people do believe in Christ as Someone good, and they do admire a sincerely good life: but too often they regard that sort of life as out of the question for themselves—they feel far too powerless to attempt it—and it does not occur to them that in the Sacrament, rightly received, the Life of Christ is available for them and waiting to help them, so that in Him they could live that good and Christian life which, without Him, is indeed impossible. The average Englishman and woman do not use the Sacraments, because as a rule they do not understand them.

Thus Sacraments have come to be regarded as the privilege of the pious, instead of the support and stay of struggling sinners. We have, un-

wittingly no doubt, largely ear-marked the Sacraments for the use of what we might call the aristocracy of religion—the pious people who are temperamentally pious and religious. We have unconsciously filched them away from the poor tempted or fallen souls who need them most. We have made them the completion of the religious life instead of the commencement as well. We have safeguarded them from desecration until we have made them the preserve of the professionally pious.

Let us then try to understand what the Sacraments really are, and what gifts they bring to any soul who really wants and desires those gifts.

Baptism and Holy Communion are, of course, in a class by themselves. They are the Sacraments which Christ instituted Himself, and to which He Himself attached a visible sign. They are, too (by the teaching of the Bible, the Church Universal, and the Church of England in particular) "generally necessary to Salvation"; that is, we must all receive them if we wish to be definitely included in the Christian scheme of salvation. They are also, above all, important because they are the "media"—the means or instruments by which the glorified Human Life of Jesus is imparted to and shared by His redeemed children. So Baptism and Holy Communion stand out as "the Sacraments of the Gospel."

(*a*) In Baptism a person becomes regenerate, or born again. For the baptized receive new life. This new life is the Life of Jesus communicated to

them at the moment when they are grafted into His Mystical Body the Church, and so into Himself. Another branch is grafted into the Vine and shares the life and sap thereof: the promises of forgiveness of sin and adoption as Sons of God are fulfilled when the baptized person is grafted into the Perfect Humanity of Jesus: and the once unregenerate and not-yet-Christian child of Adam becomes, by baptism into Jesus, the regenerate, Christian child of God. If one wishes to be quite clear about Baptism one has only to read the service of Baptism in the Book of Common Prayer.

(*b*) In Holy Communion the same baptized and regenerated soul is sustained, fed, and nourished by the Food which Christ supplies, even Himself—His own spiritual, real, human, glorified, sacramental Body and Blood.

It is by the reception of this holy Food that He evermore dwells in us and we in Him.

Besides and beyond these two pre-eminent and outstanding Sacraments, unique because they bring the Life of Christ positively and actually into the lives of men and women, there exist other ordinances of a sacramental nature which are "commonly called Sacraments." And the term Sacrament can most conveniently be retained for them, partly from ancient usage, and partly because it describes the fact that they possess some kind of outward sign and confer an inward Grace or blessing. The ordinances in question are, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Order, Matrimony, and Unction.

I have used the phrases "some kind of outward

sign" and "sacramental ordinances" because it is not easy to classify and group these five Sacraments.

It is, for instance, difficult to say precisely what the actual "sign" of matrimony is: again, the number of ordinances reckoned as Sacraments has varied from time to time.

Personally I would retain the old name of Sacrament for the reasons stated above, and also in order to champion the spiritual significance and value of them: yet I see that there are real reasons for making a deep distinction between them and the "Sacraments of the Gospel." For the latter impart to men the very actual Life of Christ Himself, while the former bestow blessings indeed, but not Christ's own glorified Life: the Sacraments which do this must ever remain in solitary eminence.

Yet it is difficult to overstate the value of these other ordinances. And the Church of England, though she has rightly insisted on the supremacy of the Gospel Sacraments, has yet great cause of sorrow in that many of her children have sadly undervalued those other real means of grace and blessing, which find their authority or sanction in the New Testament and possess besides a peculiar value in sanctifying and hallowing and redeeming the various crises and turning-points of human life.

Let me take them one by one.

(*a*) *Confirmation* is the bestowal of the Holy Spirit by means of the laying on of hands with prayer by the chief ministers (Apostles, Bishops) of the Church of God.

It is a scriptural ordinance of which a most vivid

portraiture is given in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles : "Then laid they their hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost."

It was, of course, as always, necessary that those who received the gift should be in a right state of mind and will before the gift could be any use, but the glory and essence of Confirmation was that the Holy Ghost Himself, the Paraclete, came from the Risen Jesus to dwell in the hearts of His children, and endow them with courage and strength for the battle of life.

Yet far too often Confirmation is treated as if it were solely a service for the ratification of those baptismal vows which are made in the name of an infant at Baptism.

That is not Confirmation : the "ratifying and confirming" of the vows is of course necessary in the sense that some real preparation of the heart is necessary for the fruitful reception of the Grace, but the Confirmation itself is the reception by the confirmand of the Holy Spirit, Who comes "by the laying on of hands," to bestow His sevenfold gifts, and to reproduce in yet another soul the Christ-life and the Christ-character. Do our children get taught this ? Isn't it just what they need at the critical time of Confirmation ? If any doubt the teaching of the Bible on Confirmation let him read the eighth chapter of the Acts and judge for himself.

(*b*) I need not perhaps dwell on the Sacramental ordinance of *Holy Order* because, thank God, nobler ideas of vocation and mission are gaining ground steadily. Clergy do not commonly nowadays

regard themselves as a kind of spiritual civil servant, and we know that the claim of Parliament to any spiritual authority is an anachronism, which is not even taken seriously. And surely we can recognise this truer spiritual conception of Orders as pure gain. Men will speak with more weight, their lives will gain in holiness and dignity, when they regard themselves as no State emissaries, nor even simply as delegates of the Church or congregation, but as ordained and sent forth by the Holy Spirit as agents of God for spreading His Kingdom.

(*c*) But in regard to *Matrimony* we do need intensely to recover its sacramental character. To assert, that is, that marriage is not just a licence for two persons to live together, but is a Sacrament in which God makes two persons to be "one flesh" and gives them Grace to live holily in the married state.

Marriage is a holy estate, and it is holy because God gives His Grace to those who seek it: otherwise marriage can be earthly, sensual, devilish.

In this matter we need two sharp upheavals of public opinion. First, the emphatic condemnation of loveless and careless marriages made for motives of policy or finance, or passing fancy. How can one expect anything but disaster if no ray of love or true considered affection blesses such a union?

The marriage relationships of people who dislike each other are not of course fornication or adultery, yet there is something horrible about them: marriage as a Sacrament is a Sacrament of lasting love and affection. This is not to plead for facilities for

divorce which the Church and the "good of the greatest number" alike condemn: it is a plea that no loveless marriages should be made, and that all marriages should be treated as holy and Sacramental, subjects of prayer and reverence and awe.

For this is the second point on which public opinion needs a revolution. Marriage is too largely treated as a civil contract, or at most as a matter entirely to do with the parties concerned. Not so, if we are Christians: there is God and the Church to consider. And God has His own laws, to which He will enforce obedience, or else unhappiness will come as a flood. Yet unloving or irresponsible couples get married, and light-hearted friends look on, while timid priests mutilate the marriage service lest the modest ears of the company assembled should be shocked by the mention of child-bearing as the expected and welcome outcome of normal marriages.

Have not all these things lowered the dignity of the Sacrament of marriage? Has not this loss of the idea of God's Presence, God's blessing, God's Grace, proved a fruitful source of unhappiness and moral evil?

The converted man will therefore honour as truly Sacramental the holy estate of matrimony.

(*d*) The Sacramental ordinance of *Unction* is also deserving of serious consideration. We know it was a scriptural practice (S. James v. 14), when any was sick, to pray over them and anoint them with oil that they might be healed in body and soul.

We know, too, the multitude of our hopeless cases of sickness and infirmity.

Is it not possible that we are faithlessly neglecting

a Christian method of healing? Many have used the method of Unction, and we are told, with success. No doubt the lack of faith on the part of the Church has crippled this means of blessing, yet any real Christian who considers all the facts would desire a restoration of this essentially scriptural practice, and would anticipate much benefit for both bodies and souls.

We may be on the eve of great advances in this direction, from which only the corporate lack of faith keeps us back.[1]

(*e*) And finally there is *Penance*, that much-abused and much-misunderstood Sacrament.

It is a subject one is almost reluctant to touch, because those who believe in it, and use it rightly, are so convinced of its blessing and help, while some who have never used it are equally convinced that it is all wrong and weakening and hopeless.[2]

I will try and present it in the true perspective.

There is no doubt that the Church of God has always used this means of remitting sin. The sins have been confessed, sometimes publicly, mostly privately, and the mouthpiece of God's pardoning sentence has been a priest who is the representative both of God and—this is important—of the Church at large, for sin is always regarded by the Church as not only against God but also against one's Christian brethren.

The Church of England, our local part of the Universal Church, is openly and frankly committed to this means of forgiveness, and not only gives

[1] Vide an article on the subject in *East and West*, January, 1914.

[2] Vide *The Claims and Promise of the Church*, p. 128. (Mowbray.)

power to her priests at ordination to absolve, but also cordially invites sinful souls to avail themselves of their services. ("Let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister, and open his grief, that by the ministry of God's holy Word he may obtain the benefit of absolution." —Exhortation in Communion Service ordered to be read before *every Communion Service*.)

So far only fanatics would disagree. They might reasonably disapprove what the Church of England has done, but that would not alter the facts.

The only question then would be, Who are the people who are expected or meant to avail themselves of this special means of pardon?

The normal custom in the mediæval Church was, I suppose, much the same as the present Roman custom. Confession was necessary for mortal sin, otherwise voluntary, though recommended at intervals for devotion, and required at least once annually as a safeguard.

Many persons in the Church of England act on this general principle, and if they are serious and penitent it is probably the best rule.

Yet the Church of England has made certain changes of method. In no case is Confession compulsory. You cannot say that a person who does not go to Confession has broken any rule or custom of the Church of England. You may legitimately say that such a person is not conforming to normal Catholic custom, but so long as one remains in the Church of England and accepts its right to exist, one cannot say more.

And let us admit that compulsory Confession is a dangerous thing, and has led to much corruption and abuse.

The Roman Catholics would say that on the whole it works best: and indeed in the case of ignorant and child-like converts it may possibly be the better method. But for grown-up souls it is obviously the worse method; it may make for formalism and carelessness.

Anyway, as far as the present position of the Church of England is concerned, the question is settled: and most of us would agree that it is better so. Confession is not compulsory in the Church of England by any of her ecclesiastical laws; the individual has to face the question and settle it for himself.

Yet it is permissible to assert that the disuse of Sacramental Confession has in many cases tended to minimise the importance of sin, and has rendered penitence a casual and perfunctory thing.

No one could point to the Georgian era, when Confession was least practised, as a period of much spiritual depth or advance. And again it seems clear that human nature when deeply moved by penitence cries out for open confession; and if so what better way is there than the dignified and safeguarded method provided by the Church? It is surely better than the unguarded and amateur methods of the penitent form and the enquiry room.

So the position seems to be this: the Church of England follows the rest of the Church in expecting, and inviting, and amply providing for, those who

shall use her ministrations in this way. She compels nobody, but sees to it that everybody knows about it, and that all face for themselves the responsibility of accepting or rejecting.

The result will depend very largely on two things, the Churchmanship and the penitence of the persons concerned.

Those of us who think of ourselves as being members not exclusively of the Church of England but of a wider and broader Body, the Catholic Church of the Creeds, will naturally be drawn—as humble children of the Church—to use a method of penitence and pardon empowered by Christ and His Church, and practised by the main body of saints, both Eastern and Western.

If we are individualists this argument will have no attractions: for some of us it is overpowering. Again, if we find that we have no inward peace, and that all other efforts fail to give us the inward rightness we require, we shall doubtless be guided by the Holy Spirit to seek forgiveness down this broad and venerable avenue of Sacramental pardon. Those of us who have been led to use this method have never ceased to be thankful; nor can we cease to recommend it to those who cannot or ought not to find peace without it.

II. The next step after understanding the Sacraments is to use them intelligently and devoutly.

So the "converted man" of whom we are speaking, *i.e.* the man or woman who is in process of conversion, will certainly become a convinced and earnest user of the Sacraments in order that he may receive through them the Grace of God.

He will have been or will be baptized, and he will have received or will receive Holy Communion, because in the first of these mighty Sacraments he will be made a child of God and will receive into himself the Life of Christ for regeneration, and in Holy Communion he will receive the food of the full-grown, the Body and Blood of Christ.

Thus his life will be united to His Saviour's, and he will henceforth live by Him and in Him. And herein he will rejoice because he has found his Incarnate Lord in the fullest, completest, most intimate way that is possible this side of the grave.

As to the other Sacraments he will consider and use them as God moves him, remembering his own frailty and need of God's Grace.

He will certainly be confirmed, in obedience to the requirements of the Church of England, but his deepest motive for Confirmation will be the desire to receive and possess the perpetual indwelling of the Holy Spirit with His sevenfold gifts of Grace.

His only remaining anxiety will be that he may receive the Grace of the Sacraments with the right disposition and intentions, that is, with repentance and faith. "Repentance whereby we forsake sin, and faith whereby we verily believe the promises of God made to us in that Sacrament" (Prayer-book Catechism). If he analyses these terms with a little more detail he will find that they work out thus. Repentance breaks up into three parts, generally known as Contrition, Confession, Satisfaction. Contrition means sorrow for sinning against God and man, and willingness to make any reparation we can:

Confession means that we do not hide our sins but tell them out to God and if necessary to man also : Satisfaction means that we humbly put up with any unpleasant results which follow our sins.

Faith means that we believe in the love and mercy of God given us through our Lord Christ, and that we believe that He will be as good as His word not only in general, but in regard to the particular Sacrament we are using. Both faith and repentance must be kept fresh and living, otherwise Sacraments will not help. They are not magic, therefore they cannot help the hardened heart, the scornful mind, and the unsurrendered will. And never at any time, whether in prayer or use of Sacraments, must we forget the rest of God's family.

Holy Communion, the feeding on the Sacrifice, is not an individualistic act. It is the common meal of the family of Christ.

Therefore all must be in charity with each other. This idea has been much obscured, partly through controversies on other aspects of the Sacrament.

The old idea of the common loaf broken up then and there, signifying that we all partook of the One Bread which is Christ, was a valuable bit of symbolism : we cannot overvalue the corporate idea, or make too much of the truth that the family which clusters round the altar is *our* family because Christ's family. To one and all of them we owe the goodwill, the affectionateness, the courtesy which is due and right between blood-brothers and sisters : members of the great family of Jesus—the Catholic Church of Christ.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

So far we have almost entirely occupied ourselves with the subject of God's movement towards man, and man's responsive movement towards God. God has through various great Acts offered to all men cleansing and pardon and a share in the Divine Life. And the man we have been taking as a sort of stock Christian has responded to God's call and is living the life of conversion, prayer, and worship —continually sustained by that Sacramental Grace which initiated him into the Life of Jesus and keeps him there.

But we cannot stop at this point. If one can isolate one's duty to God from the duty to one's neighbour, no doubt our man is all right: but one cannot separate for long, if ever, the two duties. So we must ask what will be the effect of a real converted life in Grace upon the world: upon neighbours, upon friends.

What sort of a man or woman will conversion and Grace turn out? Different from others, of course, but in what ways different?

What is the character which a perfect Christianity would tend to produce? This is obviously not an easy question to answer in detail. For Christianity

did not evacuate of meaning and value all pre-Christian virtues and characteristics, whether Jewish or pagan. The chastity of Joseph was chastity though pre-Christian, the courage of David was courage, the love of Jonathan was love.

The cardinal virtues did not have to wait to be virtuous till Christ came. Justice, temperance, fortitude, prudence, have always been good, and are in some real degree reflections of the character of God.

But Christian ethics enthrone one overmastering motive as the source and ruler of all other motives, so that these latter have to vacate any independence of position, and must arrange themselves as departments of one sovereign virtue—Love.

None of the old strong virtues are abolished: Christianity takes them over under a new agreement, stipulating that they shall reflect some aspect of Love.[1]

This has sometimes been forgotten by Christians with bad results: and Love has been interpreted as sentimentality or weakness. We see this in those wretched pictures of Our Lord which portray an almost revolting effeminacy: we see it in efforts to delay or defeat justice by the exhibition of a weak charity towards oppressors. All this is false and misleading. Our Lord, the Pattern and Source of Christian Love, was strong as well as tender. He, Who demands that those who follow Him should hate—if need be—father and mother, Who confronted Pilate with serenity and met death with

[1] *Cf.* T. B. Strong, *Christian Ethics.* (Longmans.)

composure, has not abolished the old strong cardinal virtues. He has, however, given a new setting to all the virtues in view of the supremacy of the "New Commandment," and has incidentally brought into prominence as specially Christian, some virtues which—except by Christians—were and are almost universally derided and despised. Such are humility, meekness, purity, and pity, virtues of supreme position in Christianity, and yet quite incomprehensible even to Christians until they visualise them in the light of Christian Love.

Let us examine these virtues seriatim, for they must be ours if ever we are to enter the final Kingdom of God.

But we shall never get near to understanding them, to say nothing of acquiring them, until we are clear about Love. God loves us as His children and we love Him as our Father. It is not any more a sentimentality than the love of any human child for any human father. It is capable of being mere sentimentality, but if so there's a mistake somewhere, as also with the parallel human relationship.

And we can love God all the more because, as we have seen already, He has done great things for us, whereby He has admitted us into the Life of God and so given us, in Jesus, the hope and assurance of unlimited progress in holiness, beauty, and Love.

But the Father is not the Father of one individual saved Christian: He is the Creator of all, and the Father in especial of all Christians because they are in Christ. Wherefore we are brethren by nature

to all human beings, and brethren by Grace to all Christians.

Therefore all the world is one family: and it is only lack of imagination that prevents us seeing that we are really just as stupid and as wicked and as heartless when we allow ourselves to oppress or misuse or prey upon *anybody* as we should think ourselves if we behaved thus towards our own household and family.

So the Christian who would be a real Christian tries to school himself to make his outlook one of love and family affection towards God and everything in the world. He does not want to score or snatch or gain at the expense of anybody else. Naturally, being human, we desire a home with some decency and comfort: nor is there any harm in possessing objects and instruments of culture and refinement.

Yet not at anyone else's expense: we want everybody to have the means of a happy and useful life. It should be to the Christian's sorrow and indignation that the world is so unjustly apportioned, while most people are too selfish to care.

With this outlook then, and from this angle of view, we can begin to understand the specially Christian virtues.

Humility is born when we see the absurdity of comparing ourselves with God, and don't want to compare ourselves with our brothers. This doesn't mean that we clothe ourselves with mock humility and pretend we can't do things when we can, nor does it mean that, *e.g.*, we try to be second in a race

when we ought to be first, but it does mean that we behave as, *e.g.*, good sportsmen always do : who never brag after a victory, but always make excuses for their opponent and praise him rather than themselves.

Humility is the opposite of self-advertisement, brag, egoism, but the motive of Christian humility is not simply sportsmanship, but an affection for the "rest of the family" which forbids comparison of oneself with another if it be to their disadvantage.

Meekness is at first sight a more difficult virtue. For as a man gets older he gets sick of boastfulness and pride and admires modesty and humility, even if it be not specifically Christian. But meekness : no. We picture some occasion when a man ought to fight for his honour or his friends, and refrains. He may call it meekness : we call it something else.

But to think this is to do an injustice to meekness. It is not inconsistent with anger nor with fighting. Our Lord was angry with the Pharisees, and with a scourge of small cords drove the sacrilegious hucksters out of the Temple.

There is, moreover, a Bible phrase, " the wrath of the Lamb," which deserves a good deal of silent thought.

Meekness really means that a man will not fight for merely *personal* ends : and that, not because he is afraid, but because he doesn't care enough to fight about it. When you have very important things on hand you can't worry about trifles : and if you are deeply engrossed in trying to serve

God and to revolutionise the world, you really can't stop to fight every man who calls you a fool or throws a bit of mud at you. You are not enough interested in yourself. Let him attack your cause, your country; let him try and oppress the weak and the defenceless; you will soon show him, I expect, that meekness is not weakness.

For here is the vulnerable point in much current Christian meekness. It is weak. It forgets that rage is sometimes right. It ignores the fact that even a brother may need correction, resistance, or rebuke. It has not got clear that comparative indifference to one's own interests must be the result of being terribly in earnest for the interests of God and humanity. Strong meekness—the meekness of Christ—is what we need, and is the real Christian virtue. It is a quality of those who have entirely subordinated themselves to the cause they serve. They care so much about the cause, that they cease to care for self.

Purity is a Christian virtue about which there has been a good deal of confusion of thought.

It means that the bodily desires are regulated in accordance with the love of God and the love of our neighbour.

Christian purity believes in holy marriage, and holy virginity: nothing otherwise, and nothing in between; and the Christian man or woman who loves God and loves others, will fear and hate and avoid all those warped, misused, and selfish passions which so plainly degrade the soul, and whose consequences so insistently cry for justice to God.

And, finally, we discover in *Christian Pity* this same law of love and respect.

If death was the end, if materialists were right, it wouldn't really matter much where we died or how we lived or how we fared. The old might be put out of their misery, and sickly children had better die. Lepers and cripples must be kept out of sight and not thought about. But Christian pity is founded on great respect. These suffering people, who are they? They are Christ's suffering members, Christ's friends, sharing His sufferings and His Passion: they are *our* brethren, our concern; we must do what Christ would do by way of pity, affection, relief.

Thus Christian character is founded on love. And that love is always twofold: it is of God and one's neighbour; there can be no schism in it. And a Christian must be content to be judged by his love to others. Nothing will convince others that we love God unless we are trying to be thoughtful for others.

The monk who prays in the wilderness must satisfy us that he is praying for the world before we will canonise him: the wife who goes to church frequently must assure us that things are comfortable at home against her husband's return. The employer of labour must satisfy us that he knows the minimum wage on which any of his employees can live in decency and honour, and pays him accordingly: otherwise we will not call him a Christian. The Christian workman must admit that he regards his master's interests as his own, and does a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

If the priest is to convince us that he loves God, he must love his flock: if the rich man or woman goes to church we shall expect them to remember the poverty of the poor, and to recollect that luxury is wrong, not in itself, but because our brethren's necessities must come before a Christian's luxuries.

Thus Christianity, the life in Christ, will always, so far as it is truly lived, issue in a Christian character which is founded on one grand and simple principle—the Love of God and the love of man.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER IN ACTION

ALL doing is the expression of being: character must fulfil itself in actions. A strong character will issue in strong, definite acts, a weak character in acts of weakness and hesitation.

The Christian character, therefore, as far as it is truly Christian, *i.e.* strongly loving towards God and man, must and will issue in strong, vital, fruitful action. The life of the Christian must be the reproduction on the part of the individual Christian of the life of Christ Who lives in him.

Christ lives in the Christian, and the Christian must express Christ. Accordingly, an idle, desultory, purposeless, ineffective life is simply un-Christian. Even the passivity of Christians in irremediable illness or suffering should be transformed—at least in will and intention—into a steadfast purpose and act of acquiescence in the Will of God, and of determination to share mystically in the sufferings and pain of Christ by which Our Lord redeems the world. To do nothing, then, is as un-Christian as to be a thief or a liar: it is a sponging on society, a parasitical existence. "If he will not work," says S. Paul, "neither let him eat."

But Christian love is not content with doing one's own ordinary life's work, dignified and entirely necessary though that is for all. There are things to be done and other things to be fought if humanity is to make progress as Love would desire.

Christianity has suffered terribly in men's eyes from being—quite wrongly—identified with a spirit of inward devotion, but outward passivity and ineffectiveness. It is true, as we saw in the case of meekness, that the Christian tends to lose interest in purely personal ends; not because he is losing interest in everything (this is a pestilent heresy), but because he is ceasing to have supreme interest in his own personal affairs as opposed to or apart from the interests of God and humanity in general. If we find a Christian pleading meekness and humility as an excuse for sinking into torpor and indifference towards the interests of his family, his Church, or his country, we may discern at once that this is but a blind-alley Christianity.

The true attitude of the Christian towards the welfare of others is not difficult to portray. Every mother and most fathers are almost perfect illustrations. For nearly all parents prefer to see their children better housed, better clothed, better off, than themselves. They do not want to carry off their own good fortune into a corner like a dog carries a bone, and then growl if their children come near. On the contrary, they prefer their children to have their fair share.

A Christian (by which I always mean, of course, the ideal Christian) simply extends his idea of the

size of his family, and wishes to include all mankind within it. "Let everybody, since they are all children of God, have their fair share of all goods, spiritual and temporal: let me count as one, but as no more than one."

May I repeat that this does not mean that the Christian wants to give up the decencies and amenities of life: but it does mean that it increasingly becomes his aim and happiness that nobody shall be left out in the cold, and that all shall have their fair share.

Accordingly, the Christian does become more meek and careless about purely personal ends: but he is, or should be, passionately active and aggressive about the things that do matter—the interests of God and of humanity in general and in particular.

I am afraid that Christians must admit that this truth has often been unrecognised. It has been assumed that a Christian will be thoroughly tame and torpid over everything. "No enthusiasm, gentlemen," has been said by Bishops in the past to clergy at their ordination: while even now a priest who is a social reformer may have to get used to hearing "that he ought to stick to the Gospel."

So Christians must always be fighters: meek and terrible fighters, but never for their own individual interests. It is forgetfulness of this great truth which gives point to writers like Nietzsche, who reject Christianity because Christians have suffered from spiritual anæmia.

It is this same forgetfulness of the need of the fighting spirit which has given real cause to the leaders of industrial freedom and reform to point the finger of scorn at the Church. We have deserved it, though it is not too late to repent.

But the fault, let us remember, is not in Christianity. It arises from the inability of Christians to distinguish between fighting for themselves and fighting for justice, truth, and honour. It comes from forgetting that the character of Christ is two-sided, that "Jesus meek and gentle" is only half the truth : "Lo, He comes with clouds descending" must be also included. The Lover of Sinners is also the Judge of quick and dead, the Avenger of His Saints.

The Christian will be judged not only as to whether he refrained from certain excesses of passion, but whether he declined to draw the sword in the cause of God and Humanity.

It is as un-Christian to sit down tamely under prostitution or sweating, as to commit adultery or murder. "We have left undone the things which we ought to have done" : "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered or thirsty or naked ? And He said unto them : Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these My brethren ye did it not unto Me. . . . Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

Indifference, acquiescence in injustice and oppression, the sheathing of the sword while unremedied evils remain : these are no Christian virtues : they cannot shelter themselves under the skirts of Christian meekness : they are simply forms of the sin

of omission, they in no way express the Mind of Christ.

Is it possible to enumerate in a few lines the things which *are* worth fighting for? The things which are the proper field of action for every active Christian in regard to his fellow-men? The things which every Christian must work and pray and fight to get done, so that the Kingdom of God may be established on earth? Roughly they might be grouped under four heads.

(*a*) The spiritual welfare of mankind.

Every Christian must actively want every human being to be a Christian. And the reason for this is partly because it is the Will and desire of God that all the souls whom He has created should be His children not only by nature, but by adoption into the redeemed family of Jesus Christ.

What He wills, we try to will, and for His Sake we desire to bring all into Christ.

But the other reason we have is that we believe that only in Christ will our brother men find their highest happiness and joy. In Christ alone will they find that holiness which is necessary for future blessedness. In Him alone will they find the strength and the perseverance by which they can become Saints. Without Him they will never find either perfect rest or perfect achievement, because all are made to fit Him, and until they find Him are restless and uncontent.

Outside Him they will never find power to do all God means them to accomplish of labour, suffering, love, and victory.

Some of them may get along fairly comfortably in this world, and seem to possess sufficient strength for this life, though they miss much and have little message to pass on, but we are convinced that one day they will find themselves amid spiritual surroundings and events where their own endowments will be of little avail, so that if ever they are to find the Father it must be through Christ.

In this world they resemble bathers in the baths, able to perform passably in the narrow waters : we believe that in the days to come, when they are helpless swimmers in the vast ocean of Eternity, only Christ walking on the waters can save them in their agony.

Therefore the Christian will put himself on the side of all missionary work. He will pray for and support all Missions at home and abroad which aim by just and fair methods at winning every soul to union with the Lord.

(*b*) The moral welfare of mankind.

If we believe that Christian morality is a reflection of the justice, purity, holiness of God, we shall want everybody in the world to be moral. For everybody is called to be like Christ, Who is God.

Our main method of bringing this about will be by persuasion and precept, for we know that the acceptance of Christianity is incomparably the most potent lever by which mankind is made moral.

But there are obstacles in the way of both Christianity and morality which it is our duty to fight. Everybody would admit and deplore the existence

of social conditions which make morality difficult if not impossible.

I do not say that many victims of these evils are not good Christians: but that is no excuse for the existence of the evil; moreover, it is clearly much more difficult to be moral under this sort of conditions than it need be. For we must not limit morality to abstinence from what is technically known as sin. A true morality is exhibited by Christian love working in every right action and relationship of life: in happy homes, kindly actions, and all the offices and ministrations of love and duty.

How are all these things reasonably and fully possible for sweated workers in overcrowded homes?

While such evils exist, while the full moral life is made practically impossible for our brothers and sisters, no Christian can be otherwise than uneasy in conscience, and anxious to see things altered.

(*c*) The intellectual advance of mankind.

If God is not only the Goodness, but also the Beauty and Intelligence of the universe, then all advance in Truth and Knowledge and Art in all their forms, is an advance in the revelation of God and God's ways.

A world without science, without historical truth, without the harmony and rhythm or the form and colour of art, would be a mutilated world indeed.

A society without its philosophers and scientists, its poets, painters, and musicians, would lose immeasurably, not only in knowledge of the universe, but in knowledge of God.

And though no philosophy or art could compensate for the loss of goodness or religion, yet this is an antithesis which ought never to be seriously made. There need not be any ultimate incompatibility between them, while without philosophy, science, and art, religion would be inexpressibly meaner and poorer. There is, however, some difficulty as regards the real or supposed disharmony between religion and science.

The truth is that the unhappy dissensions in the past between some religious people and some scientists, in which the religious people were largely at fault, has rendered many Christians suspicious of the advance of science. Yet how absurd it is to imagine that the more we know of God's ways, the less we know of God.

Religious people were scared: perhaps not unnaturally, though rather faithlessly and unintelligently. They feared lest they might be forced, if they accepted certain intellectual hypotheses which they did not understand or distrusted, to abandon the religion of which by faith and experience they had become morally certain. They forgot that if their moral and religious convictions were true they must progressively be sanctioned by the intellect. For the intellect must have its rightful place and authority in religion: it clears away superstition, it harmonises the truths of religion, it makes faith intelligent, it reveals to us more intimately than before the facts and methods of God's working in the world of nature and in human minds.

It is time that we recovered from the scare: both

theologians and scientists are humbler to-day. We remember that in the past Christianity at its best has welcomed the aid of the intellect. We do not blush for Origen and Clement, for S. Augustine and S. Thomas. Our universities and schools were built and endowed by Churchmen. As then the Church has trusted the intellect in the past, it must learn to trust it in the future.

It is not the whole of man, but it has its part to play. We need more faith in God and trust in man, whereby Christians may become once more whole-hearted advocates of real knowledge, true science, honest history, and genuine philosophy. Yet while acknowledging all this, I think Christians had a good deal of excuse for their anxiety.

After all, we Christians are anxious only because we too are in search of the whole of truth.

People think we are out to save our own selfish souls and get to Heaven and avoid hell at any price —including the sacrifice of honesty and truth. But indeed it is not so. For our idea of Heaven is never solitary bliss with God, *solus cum solo*. We have learnt long ago from Christianity that as terrestrial life is organic and corporate so also is celestial. We would not wish to be specially favoured (nor shall we be), nor do we want a Heaven which is only a selfish clutching of our own satisfactions. We have long ago got the term "usefulness" into our ideas of Heaven, for we think of our happiness as being indeed "in God," but as including also, and being part of, the happiness of all God's children.

We hope to be for ever not only God's lovers but lovers of all others; we desire to be not only God's courtiers but God's workmen.

So let us not be accused of mere selfishness and self-centred hedonistic grasping, for we know well that we shall never enter Heaven nor will Heaven enter into us if we think solely or primarily of ourselves. Selfishness is not the reason why we shrink from pure intellectualism. The fact is that we are morally and spiritually convinced that there are truths which the heart reveals, and which the intellect could not have revealed though it must substantiate. In parallel spheres there is music, and there is human love, which are in similar case. It is no good telling us that horsehair on catgut could not possibly produce the delights we feel. And we still go on loving and believe love to be divine, even when Schopenhauer has finished telling us that the basis and explanation of the whole thing is solely physical and sexual.

We are really out for a much bigger thing than the scientist or the artist. No scientist ever wanted to know Truth more than we do, but our Truth must include the Truth of God and Man. No artist wants Beauty more than we do, but ours must include the Eternal and Uncreated Beauty. No lover desires love more than we, but our longing is to share the heart of God as well as the heart of man or woman.

And the hell we want to avoid is not the hell of some mediæval pictures. Our hell is the failure to find God: to have lost Someone inexpressibly

Lovely for Whom we were made, and Whom we could have found, but, by our own fault, have lost.

We are no obscurantists fighting against the intellect. We want to give the intellect its place: we repent if, and when, we have faithlessly failed to do so.

But we cannot admit that it covers the whole ground, or makes truths, really revealed by other channels, untrue.

(*d*) The social welfare of mankind.

The Christian will also work for the human happiness of mankind.

It is possible to get religion in such a form as to make one inhuman.

Morality without love can produce a very sour and unlovely type of character. But the Christianity of Christ and His Saints, the Christianity of S. Francis or S. Hugh, is a happy thing, a human thing, a graceful and radiant thing. Christians ought to want people to be happy as well as good: largely happy because they are good.

And the happiness which comes from the life in God is not over-solemn, or heavy-featured, but is real, gay, sparkling, human happiness, the sort of thing Christ shared and produced at Cana of Galilee. It breaks into song and music, it tumbles with the children in the hay, it murmurs in the voices of lovers, it lives and revels in all that is strong and true, clean and cheerful.

It would fain colour all life, all work, all play.

But in our stupidity and carelessness we do our best to drive it away from the lives and homes of men.

We box up our workers in stifling courts and dusty streets ; we allow some men to be so rich that they grow wearied with the cares of wealth, while others are so poor that life is one long anxiety for daily food and nightly shelter.

We seem to welcome houses without gardens, streets without beauty, houses without conveniences, buildings without dignity—at least for the poor. We are only just beginning again in England to understand garden cities ; we have been content to herd men into poky rooms in dull and monotonous streets, and then blame them for spending their evenings in their only possible refuge, the public-house.

Even to this day we are immeasurably behind the cities of the Continent in providing music and refreshment for the evenings of our people.

All these considerations will open up unlimited avenues of work and action for the Christian who is also a human being.

Decent and cheap houses for all : good food and drink, plentiful, and moderate in price : proper means of recreation within the reach of all : garden cities : open spaces : more music : spontaneity and gaiety encouraged : fussy red tape and repression resisted : shorter hours : better pay : free Saturdays for all or most : these are among the aims a Christian might well make his own, with no ulterior object except this most worthy and laudable object—that the children of God should be gay, happy, and free.

For happiness is meant for this world as well as for the next.

It is as absurd to postpone all happiness to the next world, as to confine it all to this: the happiness of this world links on to the deeper happiness of Heaven.

And many, if not most, of the evil pleasures of this world arise because people are denied their proper and native happiness.

The Christian who works for the provision of the means of true happiness of others: for healthy homes, and decent hours, and proper recreation: will find that though his motive may be only the kindly human motive of giving healthy pleasure, yet the results of his work will include a diminution of sin as well.

Let us all lend a hand. In Parliament, in county and borough councils, in private enterprise.

We can begin at our homes, and work outwards: not content until, as far as we can compass it, we are—because we are Christians—getting the right things done for the glory of God and the welfare and happiness of man.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PLACE OF LENT IN "THE LIFE IN GRACE"

If what has been said in the foregoing pages is at all true, then the sketch of the Life in Grace is complete.

God made such a life possible through Christ's Atonement and Grace offered: Man can make that life his own by Conversion and Grace received.

But as Lent is approaching, it might be of interest to try and estimate the exact position and importance of Lent in the scheme of Grace, so as to see what claim it has on our intelligent and loyal observance.

The motives which lead Christians to keep Lent with real care and seriousness spring from three sources, all of which have been indicated quite clearly, I hope, in the previous chapters. For the sake of clearness I will again summarise them in paragraphs.

(1) A real motive for keeping Lent is found in the desire to obey the directions of the Church. For the Church is for us no longer an alien and external body, but the Society and family of Jesus Christ, inspired and guided by the Spirit.

When, therefore, the Church bids us fast, and pray, and repent, and indicates a certain time for this special effort, we shall be perfectly ready to obey without much question.

(2) But Lent is not simply a period of forty days chosen at random by the Church as a time of discipline and prayer. It specially commemorates and keeps alive two sorrowful events in Our Lord's Life: His fasting in the wilderness, and His Passion and Death.

Besides, then, the motive of obedience to the Church's command, we have the powerful motive of sympathy for our Master, Whose sufferings we are specially led to contemplate during this period.

So as year follows year we remember these sorrowful mysteries in the life of Our Lord as we try to accompany Him on His course, and because we sympathise with Him, we desire to make Lent the opposite of a time of feasting and light-hearted merriment.

We keep the season in the same spirit as we should wish to observe the anniversary of some national or domestic sorrow: just as some men would not wish to go to a theatre on the anniversary of their wife's death.

And because the causes of His fasting and Passion were the sins of the world, our sympathy will take the form of sorrow and repentance not only for our own sins but for the sins of that humanity of which we form part.

And we shall reflect that because Our Lord still lives, and loves His children, the causes of His

Passion must be operative still. Still He must feel, in some real sense, wounded by the ingratitude of His friends and the sorrows and sins of humanity. So we shall try to be sorry not only for His past pain but His present pain : our sympathy will be no artificial emotion over sorrows long past.

(3) And because sorrow leads to repentance and amendment we shall welcome the opportunity for training and discipline which Lent gives. For we shall never love or serve Our Lord perfectly or worship Him with the self-denial He asks unless we train. For obedience is not easy. Passions and self-centred desires are sometimes terrible things, horribly real and over-mastering, and it is not easy to say No when we want to say Yes : nor to say Yes when we long to say No. Yet we shall never make any big sacrifices or self-denials unless in some way we have trained ourselves by making small sacrifices.

David would never have been overcome by his passion for Bathsheba if he had trained himself to say No to the slackness and carelessness which kept him lingering in Jerusalem when the rest were at the front.

So Lenten self-denials are not rubbish : at least they are only rubbish if they cost nothing at all. They may be little in themselves, but they teach us to refuse certain things we like : and one day perhaps when some big temptation occurs, when desire and honour are struggling for supremacy, it will be our little bits of Lenten discipline which will give the victory to the side of the Angels.

These, then, are our reasons for keeping Lent. Obedience to the Church : sympathy with the past and present pain of our Lord : recognition of the need of training and discipline if we are to hope with any success to be athletes and soldiers of God.

Some will doubtless say, "Is the effort worth while?" But that sort of question applies not only to Lent, but to the whole Christian warfare and pilgrimage. Is that worth while? And the answer will depend, as usual, on our convictions about the fundamentals. Is there a God? Have I a soul? For what was that soul made? For what purpose am I in the world? Is it true that God sent His Son to bring us Salvation and Grace? It depends on our answer to these fundamental questionings whether the voice of Christianity is a call to surrender our life, or is only an idle sound that falls on ears too occupied with the world to give any heed. Though God stretch forth His hands to them all the day long offering to give them Himself and to reveal to them the inner secret and joyful meaning of their existence and His Love, there are heedless ones who will never turn nor care.

But those who do heed will gladly try to keep Lent, for to them a well-spent Lent is bound up with something much bigger, and is part of a life lived for God in that scheme of Grace through which He redeems and saves the world.

Printed in England at THE BALLANTYNE PRESS
SPOTTISWOODE, BALLANTYNE & Co. LTD.
Colchester, London & Eton

DATE DUE

JUL 2 8 1999

HIGHSMITH #LO-45220

BT 761 .C3 1928
THE LIFE IN GRACE/ CAREY
213369

BT 761 .C3 1928 c.2
THE LIFE IN GRACE / CAREY
213369

St. Mark's Library
175 Ninth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10011

GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
00021108